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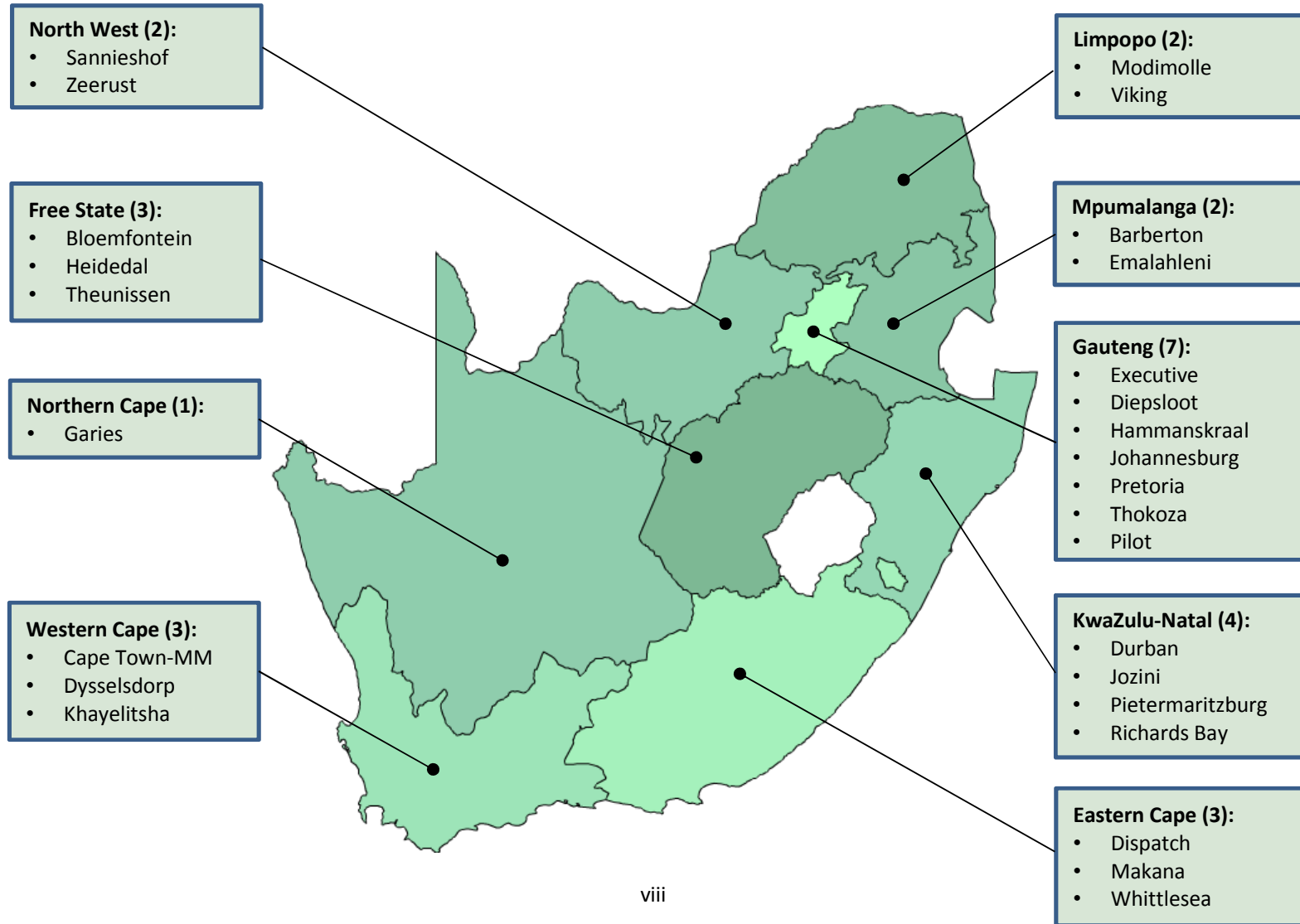
## Acronyms

ABET	adult basic education and training
ANC	African National Congress
ARV	anti-retroviral
BEE	black economic empowerment
Cope	Congress of the People
Cosatu	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DA	Democratic Alliance
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
KFC	Kentucky Fried Chicken (fast food chain)
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal province
LSM	living standards measure
MM	mixed-minority: the Cape Town mixed-minority (colored and white background) focus group
MPs	members of parliament
MPLs	members of provincial legislatures
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency

## Abbreviations and colloquial and commercial terms used in the narratives

Blossom	A butter spread / margarine
Bucket System	A bucket used as a toilet in communities without a water-borne sewage system
Burial Society	Similar to Stokvel (see below) with money saved by a group to cover funeral expenses
Dompas	Colloquial name for the pass that black-Africans had to carry in apartheid days; it was an instrument to monitor and help enforce restrictions on movement and residence
Marikana	The North West province shooting/killing of 34 striking miners by South African Police Service in August 2012; a judicial commission of enquiry is continuing its investigation
Panado	Over-the-counter mild painkiller
Rama	A butter spread / margarine
Pick-n-Pay	A supermarket chain
RDP House	Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) Houses are low cost houses built with government subsidies.
Shoprite	A supermarket chain
Stokvel	An invitation-only savings scheme or credit union with a rotating monthly payout
Tata	Former president Nelson Mandela
Tenderpreneur	Well-connected business person getting government contracts and getting rich
Ubuntu	An African philosophy that stresses selflessness, empathy and the interdependency of humanity

## Distribution of focus groups by province





# Twenty Years of South African Democracy

## Executive Summary

After 20 years of democracy, South Africans celebrate that human rights have been realized and that society is transforming. While there is strong disappointment with the government and its leaders, South Africans retain their faith in the democratic system and do not transfer their discontent to the African National Congress (ANC). These are among the key findings of Freedom House's study of South African democracy, conducted through 27 moderated focus groups convened between June and October 2013 that included South Africans from all racial and income groups and from rural as well as urban areas.

Other findings include:

- South Africans take their human rights for granted and retain faith in the democratic system, with strong support for voting.
- The ANC maintains strong voter support, despite considerable public cynicism about government and politicians.
- Citizens expect the government to build on the substantial amount it delivered during the first two decades of democracy, even if they distrust many state institutions.
- Citizens see legislative institutions as weak, unresponsive and corrupt.
- There is an extreme lack of confidence in the police, fuelled by rampant crime and the belief that lawlessness prevails.
- Although there are exceptions, most South Africans consign the experience of pervasive racism to history, and young people have moved beyond thinking along racial lines.

The study generated an authoritative dataset that makes possible new understandings of contemporary South African democracy. This executive summary outlines and interprets the main findings of the accompanying detailed research report.

South Africans maintain the ANC in power despite frequent criticisms of lack of accountability and self-serving behaviors amongst ANC leaders in government. To justify this support, citizens displace blame for the barrage of wrong-doings that they themselves cite. Thus, even as they find reasons to support the ANC, they condemn the government, or they exonerate government leaders while condemning those who are entrusted with implementation. Significantly, they believe that national government is more trustworthy than the local.

A deep sense of identification with the ANC prevails; it is part of citizens' culture to support the ANC. A young man from Emalahleni equates ANC support with a 'car that was smashed up in an accident' which one repairs, not replaces. South Africans know their leaders have been enriching themselves; however, they believe that, should a new party come to power, the new leaders may also start amassing wealth, thus pushing citizens even further down the queue for gains from the democratic system.

The ANC has forged a post-apartheid identity which helps build citizen loyalty. Society is racially transformed – despite smaller contemporary reminders of racial indignities – and the ANC is seen as

*the* movement that delivered the country from apartheid. It has created a monopoly over associations with liberation.

The voices in these focus groups talk about the main opposition party, the largely minority-supported Democratic Alliance (DA), as too reminiscent of the racial past. It is fine as an opposition party, they indicate, but they are uncertain whether the past may reoccur should they give this party their vote. They give credit to the DA for some racial transformation within the party, but they still believe, in the words of a woman from the rural village of Viking, that the party leader 'is going to come with some stunts'. They also recognize the DA's help in forcing the government to be more accountable, but they do not reward this by switching their vote.

As for the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), a young man from Richards Bay says they speak the 'language of truth to power'. Many of the groups echo this sentiment. An older man from Khayelitsha argues that EFF leaders' past as part of the ANC means they represent 'loyal opposition'.

Substantial societal transformation and policy implementation in the first two decades of democracy have helped the ANC build its continuous support. Political freedoms have become ingrained in South Africans' civic personalities. Few – particularly black-Africans – fail to see positive changes in housing, education, health, basic services and social grants. All of these services are recognized as flawed, if not seriously deficient. Nevertheless, citizens display immense patience; like an older man in Theunissen, they use the phrase 'Rome was not built in one day'.

Many look at the government as a caring parent, accepting that this parent-government retains its benevolent status in the eyes of the people. In a notable paradox, however, citizens have also started to wonder how much this government really cares. They see the current leadership class as the new 'haves' of the post-apartheid system. In this view, the leaders care for their own pockets and those of their associates. The absence of political leaders from the communities they supposedly represent exacerbates the belief that they care more for themselves than for the people. 'This is the new inequality that is killing our democracy', said a man from Hammanskraal. Participants also expressed that the politically connected and unconnected are not equal before the law.

The search for employment informs this new cleavage. Amidst very high levels of unemployment, citizens observe jobs being taken by those who are connected to the political elite. Despite the cynicism, however, they still see prospects for leaders reconsidering their current ways. In the words of a man from Khayelitsha, 'in my heart I hope that one day government will sober up and see the difference between those who are rich and those who are poor'.

The realities of being continually disadvantaged are reinforced through deficiencies in the quality of life on the ground. Citizens are exposed to crime and to police whom they see as complicit with and sympathetic to criminals, leaving law-abiding citizens feeling vulnerable. They see suspected rapists and violent robbers roaming their streets, within a day or two of being charged. There is little prospect of a fair trial because 'the files get eaten by the dog', as a woman from the Barberton group remarked. Communities round up criminals themselves and beat them as a pragmatic alternative to the police taking an extended time to respond to calls.

In the focus groups, citizens across all provincial, racial, class and party political lines stated that the government institutions designed to be accessible and responsive – the local, provincial and national

legislative institutions – are instead distant and unresponsive. In their place, some citizens recommend protest: ‘Cause chaos and get representation’ is the advice from Richards Bay. Paradoxically, this form of direct action helps citizens remain loyal to the ANC because there is a perception that it produces results. Direct advocacy in the form of complaints to the government gives people another avenue to extract more services, rather than switch to an opposition party.

Despite citizens relying on or supporting protest to improve representation, the report findings testify to the continued love affair with elections. Most citizens’ disappointment with the institutions of democratic government and disillusionment with political elites do not mean that they disavow elections. Some will vote in order to make change – either to strengthen an opposition party of choice, or in the belief that after further affirmation, the ANC will deliver more. Others vote for the ANC to protect the 1994 victory. They also support the ANC in tribute to what they see as Mandela’s virtuous democracy.

## Section 1: Introduction: objectives, methodology, analysis and political context

- 1.1 Introduction and objectives of the study
- 1.2 Methodology and implementation of the study
- 1.3 Use of quotations in this report
- 1.4 Report structure

### 1.1 Introduction and objectives of the study

This study provides a grassroots view of where South Africa stands in 2013 in fulfilling the aspirations embodied in the Constitution and the democratic system that was established almost 20 years ago.

It offers revealing bottom-up perspectives on how South Africans feel about the human rights they enjoy and see others around them enjoying, the political system and how it works for them, how political leaders are faring in representing them, and the forms of public participation that work for them, or not. This report offers the latest insights into how South Africans relate to the political parties that represent them. The voices in this study illuminate the choices that South African citizens will encounter when they go to the polls in 2014.

Using in-depth qualitative research, the study reaches beyond statistics and explores what lies in the hearts and minds of citizens. In typical focus group style, the report uses the words of the focus group participants themselves. The quotations in this report bring their experiences and perceptions to life. The analysis represents the accumulated voices of these citizen-participants stating and arguing their experiences of democracy.

### 1.2 Methodology and implementation of the study

Focus groups are a valued research tool to gain in-depth understanding of current and unfolding phenomena, such as democracy and the experiences of human rights in South Africa. The focus groups in this study comprised 6–9 participants, all carefully recruited in line with pre-set demographic and geographic criteria.<sup>1</sup> Both the relative participant homogeneity and the style of moderation were designed to facilitate relaxed and non-threatening discussions. Participants were encouraged to feel free to share their experiences and insights, and the discussions reflected this. They were informed that there were no right or wrong answers and they should share their experiences, perceptions and insights. Participation was voluntary and overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

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<sup>1</sup> Face-to-face recruitment was done for all groups with the exception of the Executive group, which was done telephonically. Recruitment was typically carried out outside community halls, shopping centres and intersections. Within rural areas recruitment also happened at small local shops within the given community. For metro and urban areas participants were recruited from areas surrounding the location of the group (see Table 1) while for rural groups, respondents were drawn from that specific area. The recruitment for metro and urban areas was confirmed a week in advance while recruiters for rural areas conducted their work 3–4 days before the scheduled group.

Ensuring the demographic and geographic design of focus groups in this study was of the utmost importance. The 27 groups – a high number by the standards of focus group research – provided excellent national coverage. The project complied with rigorous recruitment criteria (reflected in Table 1). Strict adherence to the recruitment schedules ensured that there were no ‘groupies’ (people who regularly attend focus groups), besides bringing participants of a range of geographic and demographic backgrounds (gender, race, age group, language, living standards measure (LSM) status, unemployment status) into the groups. Both employed and unemployed citizens were recruited.

Responsibilities in the implementation of the study were:

- Susan Booysen designed the discussion guide, with valuable comment and suggestions from the Freedom House Johannesburg office staff and Ipsos.
- Group profiles were determined jointly by Booysen, Freedom House and Ipsos.
- Ipsos, Booysen and Freedom House conducted the moderator briefings.
- Ipsos implemented the fieldwork.
- The whole team conducted quality checks. These included the observation of groups that had formal observation facilities and the careful scrutiny of recordings and transcriptions of the rest of the discussions. Ipsos did the translations and transcriptions.
- Booysen was responsible for data analysis and report-writing, with report structuring and editing assistance by Freedom House’s team in Johannesburg and Washington, DC.

Experienced and professional moderators conducted the discussions. They were selected to be demographically as close as possible to the group characteristics and adhered to a detailed discussion guide (see Appendix A for a synopsis of the discussion guide). Discussions were audio-taped, with participants’ permission. The recordings were transcribed and translated (where applicable). The discussions lasted about two and a half hours, with a break and refreshments. All participants received a modest honorarium, as token of appreciation for the time they gave. Where required, Ipsos provided transport to and from the discussion venues.

Ipsos put a range of quality control measures in place to monitor all aspects of focus group rollout. Ipsos, along with the author-analyst and Freedom House, continuously monitored project implementation.

The discussions were conducted in the predominant language of each region, with English often mixed in. Black-African groups form the large majority (17 out of 27) of the project’s focus groups. Several groups of younger ages mixed participants from the four conventional racial categories (Johannesburg and Bloemfontein). In Cape Town the one Afrikaans language group was mainly colored with some white participants. In Pretoria the Afrikaans language group was white-only, in Pietermaritzburg the white-only group was of English background, and the Durban group was Indian-only. In more detail:

- The groups were spread out across the nine provinces. Care was taken to disperse the groups across regions within provinces and not to settle for easily accessible and clustered selections (see map, p. viii). The groups covered metropolitan, city, urban, small-town and rural settings.

- Demographically, the class breakdown of the groups shows that eight groups (Khayelitsha, Dysseldorp, Garies, Barberton, Viking, Jozini, Whittlesea and Zeerust) were in the low LSM1–4 category. Ten groups (Heidedal, Theunissen, Thokoza, Diepsloot, Hammanskraal, Makana, Richards Bay, Johannesburg, Dispatch and Sannieshof) were in the mid-class categories of LSM5–7. Nine groups were in the upper class of LSM8–10, but four of them (Cape Town mixed-minority [Cape Town-MM], Modimolle, Pietermaritzburg and Bloemfontein) actually straddled the middle and upper groups, running on LSM5–9. The Executive group focused exclusively on the LSM10 category.
- In terms of age, the youth groups (ages 18–25) were the seven groups of Diepsloot, Emalahleni, Dysseldorp, Richards Bay, Pilot, Bloemfontein and Makana.
- Eleven of the groups were mixed-gender. This was amongst younger people in modern or urban settings where mixed-gender status is unlikely to impact discussions. Seven further groups were female only and nine male only. The slight imbalance is due to the additional Free State group and the decision to make the Executive group male only. In total, just under half of participants were women.

### 1.3 Use of quotations in this report

This report is about the voices of ‘ordinary’ South Africans. The focus group data enabled the researcher-analyst to ‘step into the minds’ of South Africans and describe trends based on the participants’ own words. The report uses direct quotations to illustrate the arguments, reproducing as many as possible without unnecessary duplication. When similar quotations appear it is to indicate the spread of perceptions across geographic and demographic boundaries.

The experiences, observations and words of South Africans, across a wide range of geographic areas and demographics, thus stand central to the analysis. The quotations are given as close as possible to the original words, which often had to be translated to English. The participants’ words are not censored or filtered. Because the quotes try to capture participants’ words as closely as possible, grammatical errors do appear. When the report only captures a snippet of avalanches of comments, repeated in several groups, the analysis notes this. The reported quotations remain by and large only a small segment of the totality of quotations on the theme at hand. They are selected, however, because one individual or group’s words depict the broader trends.

**Table 1:****Profiles of focus groups conducted between August and September 2013 (Pilot group conducted in June 2013)**

For continuous details on demographic backgrounds, the quotations in the text should be read in conjunction with this table.

Province	Location	Gender	Age	LSM*	Race	Community of Recruitment**	Focus Group Language
EASTERN CAPE	Dispatch	Mixed	26–39	5–7	Colored	Dispatch, Uitenhage, Rosedale, De Mist	English
	Makana	Mixed	18–25	5–7	Black-African	Makana, Jazo, Phaphamani	isiXhosa
	Whittlesea	Female	40–55	1–4	Black-African	Upper Tambo Village, Lower Tambo Village	isiXhosa
FREE STATE	Bloemfontein	Mixed	18–25	5–9	Mixed 4-race	Bloemfontein, Mangaung, Batho Township	English, Afrikaans
	Heidedal	Male	56+	5–7	Black-African	Heidedal area	Sesotho
	Theunissen***	Male	56+	5–7	Black-African	Masilo Township, Theunissen	Sesotho
GAUTENG	Executive	Male	40–55	10	Black African	Database	English
	Diepsloot	Mixed	18–25	5–7	Black African	Diepsloot All Extensions	Zulu mixed
	Hammanskraal	Male	40–55	5–7	Black-African	Hammanskraal area including Stinkwater	Sesotho mixed
	Johannesburg	Mixed	26–39	5–7	Mixed 4-race	Douglasdale, Fourways	English
	Pretoria	Mixed	26–39	7–10	White	Rooihuiskraal, Menlyn Park, Swartkops	Afrikaans
	Thokoza	Female	26–39	5–7	Black African	Thokoza, Kathlehong	isiXhosa mixed
	Pilot	Mixed	18–25	8–10	Mixed 4-race	Weltevreden Park, Winchester Hills, Soweto, Bryanston	English
KWAZULU-NATAL	Durban	Mixed	26–39	7–10	Indian	Reservoir Hills, Woodview, Kenville, Newlands	English
	Jozini	Female	40–55	1–4	Black-African	Jozini area, Makhonyeni	isiZulu
	Pietermaritzburg	Mixed	40–55	5–9	White	Scottsville, Oribi, Central Pietermaritzburg	English

LIMPOPO	Richards Bay	Male	18–25	5–7	Black-African	Township areas of Empangeni, Esikhawinu, Ngwelezane, Nseleni	isiZulu mixed
	Modimolle	Male	40–55	5–9	Black-African	All Modimolle extensions	Sepedi mixed
	Viking	Female	26–36	1–4	Black-African	Viking and Moria	Sepedi, some isiZulu
MPUMALANGA	Barberton	Female	26–39	1–4	Black-African	Barberton, Sinqobile	SiSwati mixed
NORTH WEST	Emalahleni	Male	18–25	7–10	Black-African	Shopping mall/township area	Sepedi, isiZulu, mixed
	Sannieshof	Male	26–39	5–7	Black-African	Sannieshof area	Setswana
	Zeerust	Female	56+	1–4	Black-African	Zeerust area, including Ikalegeng	Setswana
NORTHERN CAPE	Garies	Mixed	26–39	1–4	Colored	Garies area	Afrikaans
WESTERN CAPE	Cape Town-MM	Mixed	26–39	5–9	Mixed Minority	Athlone, Mitchell's Plain, Goodwood, Plumstead, Diep River	English, Afrikaans
	Dysselsdorp	Female	18–25	1–4	Colored	Dysselsdorp	Afrikaans
	Khayelitsha	Male	45–55	1–4	Black-African	Khayelitsha Township	isiXhosa

\* LSM 1–4: mainly rural or informal areas, poorer households with limited means, often destitute and/or relying on grants. LSM 5–7: mainly urbanized, middle class households, access to 'mass media'. LSM 8–10: mostly metropolitan and affluent households with access to all means.

\*\* All South African citizens, checked by ID document; in interest of confidentiality and ethics identity numbers and names were not recorded beyond the point of arrival for the discussion.

\*\*\* The Theunissen group due to low turnout was supplemented by the Heidedal group. It rendered useful data and was included in the analysis.



All quotations are referenced according to the geographic location of the group. The full group profiles concerning race, gender, age, language of the discussion LSM appear in Table 1. The report only uses the racial designation of a group when it is particularly relevant, for example when the quotation is about racial identity or opportunities that are associated with a particular group. When words are reported without attached designation, it means that there was general convergence across demographic or geographic divides.

As the bulk of the groups were black-African, the voices recorded largely depict their sentiments and experiences. When distinct voices emerged from racial minority groups, a particular gender, age group or political group, these are noted. Because the project was composed to render a *national picture* (with each province, for example, hosting group profiles that are not necessarily statistically representative), it is not possible to make comparisons based on gender, race, age group or province. Moreover, focus group methodology does not deliver quantitative results to specific questions posed. Thus, for instance, it is not possible to state the percentage of South African citizens that will vote in 2014; however the report does describe a general trend across all groups that reveals not just strong support for voting but the reasons behind it.

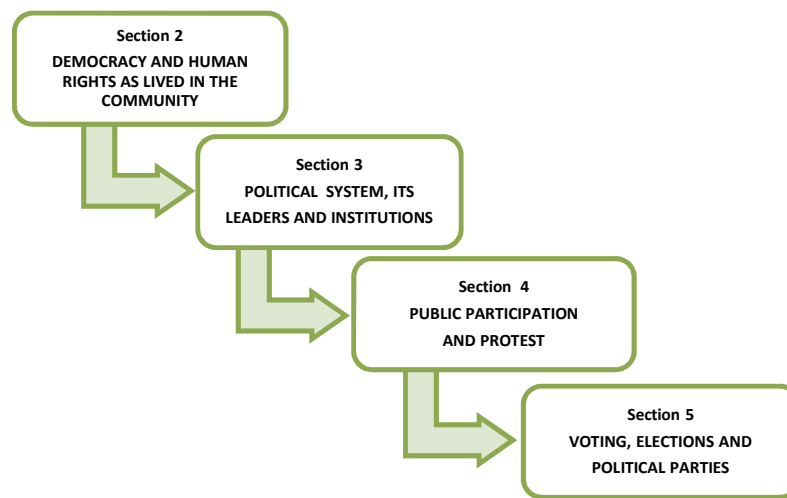
## 1.4 Report structure

Human rights and rule of law are the thread that runs through the report and analysis (see Diagram 1).

- Section 2 assesses the realization of human rights in the lives of ‘ordinary’ South Africans, through the narrative of experiences and perceptions of change in the community. Much of the focus is thus on government delivery on its governance and human rights mandates.
- Section 3 focuses on how participants view the political system, along with its operations and leaders. It considers how South Africans see their leaders working for them. Inequality before the law features centrally, with the political class in command and receiving priority treatment. At its core the section addresses perceptions of how functional the democratic political system is.
- Section 4 deals with South Africans’ views of public participation. What do they do to engage the political system, to have responsive and accountable government? Participants reflect on whether governance processes work, and whether they channel their participation into non-institutionalized (but generally accepted) forms of protest. The section includes perspectives on the mass media as extensions of citizen voice.
- Section 5 explores citizen perceptions of elections, voting behavior and political parties. It investigates whether citizens continue to accept voting to express their political needs. It notes possible disaffection from or disappointment with the ANC. The continuous systemic channeling of such sentiments is important to the vitality of the democratic political system.

**Diagram 1:**

**Democracy, human rights and rule of law in South Africa across domains of human rights, political system, citizen action and elections**



## Section 2: Human rights, change and daily life in communities across South Africa

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- 2.1 Introduction and synopsis of main findings
- 2.2 It is a *different*, much-transformed South Africa
- 2.3 Change is imperfect, but black people are in power and there is hope
- 2.4 Hope and socio-economic transformation – living the life of realized rights, with gaps
- 2.5 Economic freedom with unemployment

### 2.1 Introduction and synopsis of main findings

In democratic South Africa, people's lives have been transformed and human rights are increasingly being realized. Very often, South Africans now take political rights, including freedom of speech and assembly, for granted. Apartheid and its constraints on freedom of movement, belief and human dignity for most are now painful memories, but no longer the events of today. Rights to more tangible goods however – shelter, education, health care – are more often seen as partially fulfilled needs. Slow delivery of goods and services leads to pressure on the government to do its work faster and deliver more.

The main findings explored in this section are:

- South Africans now take their political rights and realized socio-economic rights as givens, but incomplete realization means they still expect more from their government. Improvements are tangible, but this is not the life they had dreamt of in 1994. The poor quality of services and unfulfilled promises of job creation generate discontent.
- Even in continually impoverished communities, black South Africans feel vindicated and empowered. Racism still rears its head, however the peaceful co-existence of cultural, religious and ethno-racial groups is celebrated and citizens know they have legal recourse when problems arise. Young people have largely moved beyond thinking primarily along racial lines. However, some in the minority groups feel they are excluded from societal benefits.
- Due to perceptions of corruption and self-serving leaders, citizens give government less credit for good work that happens. Yet, the people believe that the ANC government is sympathetic to their needs.
- The major social divide in the minds of citizens in 2013 is that between the rich and the poor. They believe it is 'destroying' their lives. Political leaders are seen to be on the rich side of the divide.
- Pervasive crime and views of the police as perpetrators while communities have minimal protection make citizens feel that lawlessness prevails in South Africa.

## 2.2 It is a *different, much-transformed* South Africa

After two decades of democracy, South Africa has become a vastly different place **politically, racially and socio-economically** from what it had been at the start of democracy in 1994. Some dreams of 1994 have been realized; others have been frustrated, put on hold or redirected. The views of the focus group participants on the current state of the country include the following:

Gradual **socio-economic improvements** characterize the landscape. These improvements are sufficient to make people believe that lives have changed, in nearly all cases for the better and just enough to sustain hope. Those with money and influence, from black-African backgrounds, are the new privileged class. The lives of these individuals, whose names appear in the news and who occasionally visit their compatriots in times of crisis or before elections, contrast sharply with life in the state-welfare grant zone or subsistence on minimal temporary jobs. Citizens see politicians as serving themselves above all, and as tolerant of corruption and inequality before the law.

The idea of the '**rainbow nation**' stands strong. Many single out the peaceful co-existence and unity of different cultural and ethno-racial groups as one of the country's main achievements. 'We are building the country together' was a refrain in the mixed-race youth groups, in general amongst in the age group up to 25, but also in the groups up to 35 years. Young people say they have stopped thinking along racial lines. 'This is the new South Africa', they say. There are nevertheless reminders and remnants of racism and the apartheid order. Black participants found it difficult simply to 'wipe away' memories of the racist past.

**Political freedoms** have become ingrained in South Africans' civic personalities. It is generally only when they are reminded of the range of human rights entrenched in the Constitution that black-Africans recall the days of the *dompas* (a pass that black-Africans had to carry in apartheid days) and limitations on what they could promote and with whom they could publicly associate. They are grateful to the ANC (no other former liberation movement is mentioned) for liberating them from apartheid.

But contemporary South Africa is also viewed as a place in which **disrespect for the law** and a sense of lawlessness prevails. Across demographic divides participants identified ways in which the formal rules, including constitutional obligations, do not work as intended. 'Nobody pays attention to the rules anymore,' said a Bloemfontein participant. Elected representatives fall short of *representing* citizens, and the state bureaucracy is believed to be inefficient and uncaring. The police and courts do not function well and suffer from a lack of confidence among the people. Public sector officials are seen as a law unto themselves. Those who engage in criminal, destructive or ill-disciplined behavior are perceived to subvert the 1994 intent while ruling over law-abiding citizens.

### ***The Constitution and implementation problems***

South Africans accept the Constitution as the foundation of contemporary political life. They appreciate the Bill of Rights; it tells them that government has the responsibility to do things for them. They take government policy statements, which are largely in line with the human rights provisions, to mean 'this is what we, the citizens, are entitled to'. They then consider it the government's job to bring these rights to fruition. The government shows goodwill but this is undermined by implementation problems.

### The Ten Commandments, with implementation problems

*'The Constitution is almost like the Ten Commandments ... If you abide by the rules, you're on the right track. Unfortunately there are many prescriptions not adhered to.'* (Pretoria)

*'Our country has one of the best constitutions in the world, but the problem comes when we have to implement it.'* (Emalahleni)

The credit to government for progress made is moderated by the fact that so much inappropriate action by government is visibly accompanying the 'good'.

### **Uneven realization and expectations of more**

Black-African South Africans in particular stress their belief that the government is generally sympathetic to their needs and that its policies are pro-poor. They see the government as the overall caregiver to them, in a society that suffers extensive poverty and unemployment. In this context it follows that government is seen to be responsible for doing more, or caring more, for many of its citizens: South Africans tend to insist on more and more.

Citizens across class, race and other demographic categories frequently converge in their experiences and perceptions of the key problems that afflict the country. As Section 5 will show, however, their convergent experiences have different outcomes when it comes to party politics.

**Table 2:**  
**South Africa in one word: human rights realization and the deficits**  
**Select words and phrases from multiple groups**

	GOOD THINGS	BAD THINGS
Concrete deliverables	Free education, multi-racial schools, pre-school education, free houses, child grants, old-age grants, clinics, basic medical care – access to hospitals, free ARVs, school feeding scheme, free transport to schools, no more fetching water from the river, electricity supply, sometimes free uniforms, voluntary work, business opportunities, road works, gender rights, no dompsases, live where we like, things work.	Crime, drugs, rape, lack of jobs, violence, corrupt police, corrupt politicians, nepotism, fraud, little safety, xenophobia, 'cannot discipline children' – up to no good, bail for criminals, guns, child abuse, wives have too many rights, daughters fall pregnant and get abortions, bucket system, vandalism, water and electricity interruptions, potholes, abnormal municipal accounts.
Abstract phenomena	Building the country together, freedom, democracy, right to vote, equality, stability, opportunities, freedom of speech, peace, possibilities, pride, remarkable, rainbow nation, diverse cultures living together – colorful, adventure, assistance from government, reconciliation, forgiveness, young generation see less race and color, freedom of religion.	Disappointment, poverty, lack of physical security, knife's edge, developing too slowly, nice but dangerous, empty promises, no Ubuntu, children lose their culture, municipal officials and councilors uncaring, stop importing transport systems / education systems, grim economic outlook.

### **Progress fine; we need more**

*'While not everything is going right, there are areas in which the government has made a hell of a lot of difference in our lives.'* (Jozini)

*'Our democracy has not reached ... the standard that we wanted when we first voted. It is because they are interested in fixing their pockets first and not our communities. This is killing our democracy.'* (Hammanskraal)

*'Maybe it is not always the way we wanted it, but there is a lot of change for the better.'* (Dispatch)

*'There are changes, but we need more.'* (Whittlesea)

### **Continuous and new inequalities**

*'How can you talk about equality when you put your name on the list for a house in 1994, and you are still waiting ... while Mr. Whoever from wherever walks in and is allocated a piece of land?'* (Pretoria)

*'The democracy we are living in is a capitalist system. The rich will be rich and the poor will be poor because of the rich. Capitalism goes according to that scale.'* (Makana)

*'The poor are the people who buy at Shoprite; their money does not allow them to buy at Pick-n-Pay.'* (Makana)

*'BEE means there are people treated with favor, and people who are left behind.'* (Pretoria)

## **2.3 Change is imperfect, but black people are in power and there is hope**

Black South Africans have risen, and they clearly recognize that South Africa's racial face has changed. This means a shift in power relations across society. The Executive group observed that 'African people ... black people have readopted their Africanness. Somebody is not shy if they are Zulu or Xhosa to slaughter a cow and yet during the apartheid days it wasn't there ... so now they are getting back their Africanness.' There may be vast poverty (largely amongst black South Africans), and whites are disproportionately affluent, but racial power has shifted and it continues to do so. Racial transformation is also evident in black people running the country, in 'BEE black people' who benefited from government programs now operate big companies, and in 'people who lived on the farms and worked for Afrikaners migrating to come and live in towns and get housing' (Makana).

### **Racial dignity and human pride**

Participants across racial and class lines believe that human dignity has been restored. Some of the old racial lines remain, but today they have less impact. Black South Africans no longer fear the divisions. Even in impoverished communities, people feel that they have the legal upper-hand when it comes to continued racism. South Africans trust the system under the ANC government, which helps protect their dignity and human rights. There is nevertheless disagreement. As the Executive group notes: 'People have been stripped of their dignity under this [current] government.... There is no area that shows it more than the way people are treated in hospitals and in the education system.'

### **Reconfiguring race relations**

*'What makes me happy is that we don't have black people and white people, but we are a rainbow nation.'* (Whittlesea)

*'Whites used to hate blacks with a vengeance, they barely treated us like human beings. But now they are a lot better, they know that racism is against the law.'* (Jozini)

*'Government has done [a lot] to get rid of racism in South Africa. These days if your boss handles you in a way you do not appreciate, especially with cell phone technology, you record, take it to court, and you will be heard out fairly.'* (Hammanskraal)

*'When it comes to white and black issues, things are much better compared to back in the apartheid days'* (Zeerust)

*'They [government] are doing enough, these days you can live with all kinds of people'* (Sannieshof)

*'Black people were treated like dogs ... we see the change'* (Makana)

*'There is a huge change ever since 1990. Things like affirmative action have helped boost the black race and black people can now get involved in business'* (Khayelitsha)

### **Memories of racism are not just wiped away**

*'I walked with my uncle in town, he still has that anger in him for apartheid.... It's like something that is going to be with them forever. The older people still live that anger.'* (Dispatch)

*'Government cannot eliminate racism forthwith. Don't expect whites to suddenly like us, and we can't bring ourselves to like whites after enduring oppression for so long.'* (Barberton)

Young people from multiple localities related that they do not see race and color the way older people do. The Bloemfontein mixed-race group expressed that racism still exists, but 'we have adapted and changed', 'we don't see color anymore' and 'we are standing together as a nation'. The Cape Town-MM group (predominantly of colored background) mentioned that they frequently come second in the race for jobs, but none wished to return to apartheid.

The Whittlesea women's words, 'things are so much better now', express the sea change between apartheid and now. In the past whites exploited others in the workplace, or gave them 'clothes that did not even fit'. Nowadays people negotiate their workplace rights and use banks that had been considered white spaces. The Makana participants reflected on serious incidents of racism reported in the media and pronounced that 'racism will never end'. But, like most of the participants, they conclude that the major 'racism' today is the difference between the rich and the poor.

### **Small-town racism and inequality before the law**

Despite the progress, racial incidents come to light. In small towns some whites continue to be racist. Black South Africans feel that they have to be 'humble' in the smaller towns, because they are dependent on whites to give them work. In Garies colored people reported that whites do not reciprocate when they greet them on the street. Black South Africans also see racism in the fact that their white counterparts do not contribute their expertise to community outreach programs.

### **Small-town racism**

*'The white lady owning the store ... when she gives back change, she doesn't want to touch a black person's hand.'* (Theunissen)

*'At the butchery [when you pay] you have to put the money on the counter for them to wipe it off with a handkerchief.'* (Modimolle)

*'When I go and collect my pension from [name of a supermarket], the Afrikaners speak to black people using foul language.' 'But they say it with a bit of fear in their voices because they know they are wrong.'* (Zeerust)

*'The police from this community, the white ones, they assault us.' 'A white person can run me over because I am a black person.'* (Modimolle)

### **Minority group experiences of racism**

In turn, colored participants feel that black-African South Africans are racist towards *them*. In Dysselsdorp young women agonized about 'just not fitting in anywhere' – whites refer to them as 'hotnots' and black people make fun of their accents and the way they talk. Whites in several of the groups bemoaned having to pay for their forefathers' sins. Younger minority group participants from mid- or lower socio-economic statuses crave the opportunities that they see their black compatriots enjoying.

### **Experiences of inverse racism**

*'Colored and Indian are still sandwiched in-between. If you apply for a job, you are either the wrong color, or the right color but with the wrong surname.'* (Durban)

*'We're currently in the position that black people were in during apartheid. We're not being promoted.... We can attend training sessions, but that is where it stops.'* (Garies)

*'The black people don't like us; they don't understand us.'* (Dysselsdorp)

*'First we were too black, and now we are too white.'* (Dispatch)

*'[Racism] is happening on the other end of the scale now; it's been reversed.'* (Pretoria)

*'Just to be treated equally, that is all we ask.' 'It is so unfair that our youth has to pay for what our great-great grandparents did so many years ago.'* (Pietermaritzburg)

### **New race-class inequalities**

The inequality focus has now shifted to the inequalities between the continuously poor (or relatively poor) and those who have become rich in the new South Africa. People put in power in democratic South Africa are seen to have become selfish and to care for their own, rather than for the people who put them in office. Poor people in this study focused on inter-black inequalities, much more than on black-white differences. Discontent about inter-black differences most often focused on differences in access to jobs. For example, the Makana group argued that all the freedoms 'mean nothing' if you are unemployed. There is a widespread belief that opportunities for jobs and contracts will go to those close to government – and politicians and those closely connected to them are the ones that will get rich (see Section 3).



### **Looking out for 'the other side', not for us**

*'You find that police officers and traffic cops here around us [in Gauteng] are mostly from Limpopo province.' 'Government is choc-a-bloc with Xhosas, and there are not even Xhosas living here. Up this side we don't get anything.'*  
*'Fire stations are peopled with [Se]Pedi's ... the municipality too.'* (Thokoza)

*'They are lying to us if they say we are all equal in the eyes of the law.... Xhosa people look out for Xhosa people; jobs are always given to their own people. ... and there is no Sepedi representative for us.'* (Viking)

### **Women's rights and gender roles – affirmations of change**

No or low gender discrimination against women, and legal recourse that is now available to women, is some of the evidence that participants give for the government doing well on gender rights. Specifically, this is also noted amongst women in the lower socio-economic echelons and from black-African backgrounds. They frequently make use of the child grants they receive for their children or grandchildren, and they openly talk about the life-saving difference that grants make to their lives when they are unemployed. These women have become relatively self-sufficient (at this lower end of the socio-economic ladder), and less reliant on men.

### **Child grants as livelihoods**

*'My grandkids are the ones that are putting the food on the table now, in the sense that they are getting the grants, so I thank the government for that.'* *'If mothers were not getting this money they would barely be able to keep their families going.'* (Jozini)

*'Our government is helping us with the child grants. With so much poverty it goes a long way.'*  
*'We can't afford to pay for services, because we live on our kids' grant money.'* (Whittlesea)

*'Even if we are unemployed we receive something.'* *'Without the child grant money I would not have R140 to pay for my ID document.'* *'I have four children ... so I am saving two of the grants so that [my daughter] can go to tertiary.'* (Viking)

Women benefit from the police's enthusiasm to attend to gender-related complaints, such as husbands beating their wives. However, even women complain that police often prioritize such calls over robberies and burglaries. In male groups it was quite common to hear objections that women today have 'too many' rights and can report them to the police 'without much consideration'. In the past these women would first involve parents and relatives.

### **Police prioritizing 'easy' gender complaints**

*'The lady next door calls to report that her husband is beating her; the police will rush because it is easy work ... but they have just told others in serious danger that they do not have a van available.'* (Viking)

*'I call and I say "My boyfriend is beating me" and they will be here in a flash.'* *'If they get a call that someone is being raped they take their own sweet time.'* (Thokoza)

The Modimolle men highlight some of the issues that men experience in the wake of enhanced women's rights:

*'I had an altercation with my wife and we went to the police station.... They chose her side and I was left in the cells.' 'Even the sex life has changed, there is a timetable, we cannot just take it when we feel the need anymore, we may find ourselves behind bars.' 'If I go home with this [the one-page summary of human rights used in the discussions] to tell her that I have rights too, she will definitely tell me to go back with this to where I found it.'*

### **Children's rights – celebration and shortfalls**

The general realization of human rights in South Africa has brought advantages for children, including when the rights are not specifically referred to as 'children's rights'. As the Makana group observed, 'human rights have made a big difference for children'. Participants noted access to education including pre-school and post-secondary school, better health care, school transport, feeding schemes and child grants as examples of benefits to children. Grants help both the children and the parents when unemployment has stripped families of other forms of income. On the other hand, Dispatch group members were worried about high levels of child abuse in their community.

Many participants see the outlawing of corporal punishment as limiting their ability to instil discipline in their children, which has affected both education and general development. They also fear that children are prematurely exposed to drugs and sex. The Dispatch group talked about 13-year olds who steal and do drugs. 'Kids have rights ... and this is what led to them being what they are today', complained the group of (mostly) mothers of Thokoza.

### **Low-key xenophobia**

Citizens experience growing numbers of foreigners, especially from other African countries, in South Africa. Black-African South Africans have mixed feelings about foreigners in their midst. They resent them for under-selling labor, working at a rate which South Africans would not consider, and running competitive small businesses, and they suspect that they are perpetrating crime. The Dispatch group, in contrast, appreciated the business lessons that South Africans learn from their Somali counterparts. Other groups recognized that foreigners frequently work hard and deliver services. They also wondered how many of the foreigners might be registered as South African voters, and speculated about foreigners 'taking over' in elections and government.

#### **Foreigners are 'taking over'**

*'We are overwhelmed by the large number of foreigners that come to live here.'* (Hammanskraal)

*'I see the Somalis ruling this country in ten years' time; they come in droves.'* (Barberton)

*'[Foreigners] are in charge all over.... Maybe they will lead us one day.'* (Makana)

*'How many came into South Africa over the last decade ... and now qualify to vote?'* (Pretoria)

*'... And the foreigners, eish! They are taking over!'* (Bloemfontein)

## **2.4 Hope and socio-economic transformation – living the life of realized rights, with gaps**

There was no community surveyed that did not report a range of socio-economic improvements, even if life is vastly different from what the expectations had been at the dawn of the democracy. Participants benefit from better service delivery. They discussed that there is generally – albeit with

notable exceptions – water, electricity, sanitation and refuse services, tarred streets, parks, malls and grants, and the quality of these services has improved over time. They also continue to hope that the situation will be further transformed. Despite their anger and cynicism about political leaders and many government institutions (Section 3), they see the ANC as their agent for further change.

#### **Government does things, delivery gets better**

*‘It is not like they [government] don’t do anything at all. They will do something, somewhere, somehow ... but it is not enough.’ (Diepsloot)*

*‘RDP houses followed on shacks, then we got water pipes, then electricity....’*

*‘Things are better than ever before.’ (Barberton)*

*‘There’s a huge change since 1990.... In those days the condition of our houses were just appalling.*

*Now they have bettered a bit although they are still small.’ (Khayelitsha)*

*‘You can argue that government is doing something, but are they doing it in the right way?’ (Durban)*

*‘Things are worse now but on service delivery things are better.’ (Emalaheni)*

#### **Hope sustained**

*‘We are still full of hope; we cannot run out of hope’. ‘The ANC says they will fight for people to be employed – and when you vote you give them that chance to do what they say they will.’ (Whittlesea)*

*‘They say Rome was not built in one day.’ (Theunissen) ‘Rome was not built in a day.’ (Barberton)*

*‘Things are getting better. People are rushing for change, but change will take time.’ (Pilot)*

*‘I go to vote and then just sit and wait, hoping that things will fall into place.’ (Richards Bay)*

*‘The ANC is walking side-by-side with the people; no problem.’ ‘If we give the government a chance everything will be fine.’ (Barberton)*

*‘The people on the ground are actually more optimistic than the people who are supposedly middle class and upper class. They always see a better future.’ ‘They are optimistic about the ANC delivering, even though they are protesting to say “you didn’t deliver”.’ (Executive)*

Many of the perceived gaps are due to shifting targets. The basics were delivered, but people now see the quality and consistency of services as a problem. Communities often compare their own conditions with others nearby, which are seen as having better services. Groups complained about erratic water and electricity supplies, unannounced interruptions or slow water trucks. The absence of rapid transport to Sandton bothers Thokoza residents. In contrast, although some RDP houses – low cost houses subsidized by the government – are falling apart, they are praised for sheltering elderly parents who have migrated from rural areas to small-town townships (such as Sannieshof).

The rest of this section takes stock of change in the texture of community life, across a range of sectors and as experienced on the ground.

### ***Education is better, with provisos***

Depending on geographic location and socio-economic status, participants related a range of educational changes, mostly seen as improvements. There are opportunities for free school education, adult basic education and training (ABET), and bursaries for post-secondary studies (although several groups have heard about such bursaries, but did not know how to access them). Yet, there are many places where educational problems remain rife.

Poorer communities often noted with gratitude that free education is available, government has arranged for free transport to schools for the poor, and children often are served food at school (and need not drop out because of hunger), even at some secondary schools. On occasion pupils receive uniforms and school bags, often with help from community organizations from the more privileged parts of society. In contrast, participants from more advantaged communities (across racial lines) noted the sub-standard nature of public education and schools that suffer lack of teachers and infrastructure.

### **Realized education rights**

*'We get new schools ... and you can get education, even if you don't have money.'* (Richards Bay)

*'You had to pay school fees back then, and if you didn't you would not go to school.'*

*'Our children can go to school for free, and so can we, because ABET is free.'* (Viking)

Participants in the Cape Town-MM group have sympathy for the need for black-African youth to be afforded special opportunities to gain skills training, but related their own longing to have the same opportunities, on the same scale.

Despite good access to free education, and the realization of other education opportunities, educational rights remain imperfectly realized. There were widespread reports of experiences with declining levels of education. Voices from black-African background noted improved access and the freedom to choose schools, yet they lamented that black-African pupils may come to feel inferior because many cannot escape their less privileged backgrounds. The Jozini group noted that poor children are often unable to obtain school uniforms, and hoped that their local councilor would ask the municipality for help. Several black-African groups also noted that as educational access improves, mother tongue education and valued cultural practices decline.

### **Compromised standards of education**

*'As a parent you are pleased to find out your child has been promoted to the next grade, only to find out the child has serious problems.'* (Jozini)

*'Our education system is a disgrace and for it to happen under our watch, and for us to literally destroy a generation of kids ... is an indictment worse than the years of apartheid.'* *'Just because we can go to school it doesn't mean you are getting quality education.'* (Executive)

*'Now learners are passing on 30 percent. In the 1990s I needed 50 percent.'*

*'This is like breaking down the new generation.'* (Bloemfontein)

*'[A teacher] has to mark things "right" so that they can get enough marks to meet the quota of how many children you are allowed to fail in a government school.'* (Pilot)

The Whittlesea group told the story of a community not tasting the benefits of a fully functional educational system, not enjoying full geographic access to schools and unable to afford school uniforms. Their experiences have some similarity with children in metropolitan areas that commute over great distances to access better schools (Pilot). The Whittlesea women said:

*‘Government has helped our children with transportation to the school.’ ‘But we don’t have a bridge over the river, and when it rains the children have to stay at home.’ ‘Things like technology at school we only see on TV.’ ‘Our children get educated, but when they are done with grade 12 they do not get bursaries, and they struggle to get jobs.’*

Participants noted with appreciation both access to tertiary education and the presence of black youth in South Africa’s top universities.

#### **Access to post-secondary education**

*‘These days the kids don’t need money to get an education, the government has ... bursaries.’ (Jozini)*

*‘Even if I am not at university myself, it is motivating for someone on the streets. It is not about money; we know that if we put our minds to it we can do it.’ (Richards Bay)*

#### **Opportunities for business and enterprise**

Amidst massive levels of unemployment, some in these groups extolled business opportunities and ‘freedom of business activities’ that the government has facilitated. As a person in the Executive group noted: ‘I am busy with one of the biggest deals in Gauteng and I wouldn’t have gotten it if it wasn’t for this government.’ This scenario, however, does not reach South Africans like those in the Cape Town group of racial minority backgrounds. Some from this group feel desperately caught below the floor-boards of racial identity, noting that the opportunities for learning, skills enrichment and small business facilitation elude them. They believe that they do not obtain jobs even when they have skills. Similar to the Indian Durban group, they feel they are rejected when they are otherwise qualified because of color.

Many, including from black-African groups, do not feel the government sufficiently helps them to find jobs. ‘In the past government used to assist their children [the South African people] in elevating themselves. Starting their farm business or so, but now our government does not even know how to assist us’ (Modimolle). Others, as in the Makana group, attribute the success of new or recent black-African business owners to ANC government initiatives.

#### **Food parcels and feeding schemes for children**

Several groups noted the advancement of opportunities for children due to school feeding schemes in many schools. These are seen to advance the prospects of children taking advantage of whatever education is available. Adult South Africans have mixed experiences in trying to access food parcels, noting favoritism by officials.

#### **Mixed experiences with food relief**

*‘Even if we do not have food our children can get food, as the school cooks [provides meals].’ (Whittlesea)*

*'We go and register at SASSA for food parcels, but the staff do not get our details right. Some people register after me, but they know the officials and get parcels before me.'* (Makana)

### **Health care is better, with exceptions**

There are great improvements in access to and the provision of some form of health care. However, there is little praise when participants reflect on their experiences at clinics. They first report problems simply getting to a clinic, especially amongst the elderly and sick children. When they arrive, the clinic is typically packed with people, there may very well be no or insufficient medicines in stock, or no doctor or other medical staff to attend to needs.

#### **Hospital services... but the food and maintenance!**

*'These days you can go to a hospital with no money, be admitted....'* (Viking)

*'You can go for free to some hospitals, like Pelenomi.'* (Bloemfontein)

*'If you go to the hospital they will not turn you away without first helping you.'* (Jozini)

*'You have to take your own food; food is not served in hospitals anymore.'* (Modimolle)

*'Maintenance is a problem in hospitals.' 'Medical supplies are a problem.'* (Pilot)

#### **Ambulance services, slow and partial**

*'Even when you call for an ambulance you are going to wait for a long time.... By the time they arrive someone will probably be dead.' 'It is the elderly in the rural areas who cannot walk the distance to the clinics.'* (Richards Bay)

*'Ambulances are available, but the people who drive them don't respond fast enough.'* (Jozini)

#### **Medication and the clinics**

*'With this disease [HIV] that is going around, at least the government is providing medication. People are not dying as frequently as they were before.'* (Makana)

*'I take a child to a clinic because she is in pain.... after many hours of waiting I get a Panado.'* (Jozini)

*'They will take their sweet time to attend to you, while you are sick.' 'You go there with tooth ache and they tell you to make an appointment first, and then keep on changing appointments.'* (Thokoza)

*'Even if the clinic is small and does not fit all of us, it helps the village.'* (Whittlesea)

### **Housing is much improved, but hovels remain**

Whereas many of the participants reported that their houses have improved (or that the houses that others occupy have improved), many live in shacks, in 'hovels' or share houses with their parents or other family members. They report their hope to soon be allocated a house from the government. Several of the groups discussed new housing projects in their areas, and some related experiences of corruption in the housing process.

#### **Housing delivery, but many complaints remain**

*'We used to live in huts and houses built with mud, but now we have brick houses; even if they are small, we can live in them.'* (Whittlesea)

*'The new South Africa has given me an RDP house.'* (Barberton)

*'Initially RDP houses had free carpentry and plumbing, but now we have to install our own, and the building material now is of low quality.'* 'People are free now to buy houses wherever they please.' (Emalahleni)

*'RDP houses ... after four years they are gone. Houses built in the apartheid days, 50 years ago, are still standing.'* (Executive)

*'The government did something great for us.... It allocated funds so that our homes could be restored.'* 'Government promised us houses but we still live in hovels up in the hills.' (Jozini)

*'There are four-roomed houses on the other side [of town], but people from here still have not received them.'* (Zeerust)

*'They [in government] have used housing to their advantage to get tenders for their friends and their own officials. They promise housing and it is just a money-making scheme.'* (Durban)

The ANC is not the only party that is credited with delivering housing. In Khayelitsha (Cape Town) participants mentioned the DA, linking it to voting decisions: 'We haven't really been seeing the ANC's work here.... The DA has really helped in terms of housing, and I don't think it is fair that we are not taking that into consideration when we vote.'

### ***Access to water, electricity and sewerage services***

The immediate improvement in living conditions weighs strongly on the minds of these citizens, and water and sanitation are foremost. 'South Africa is a country of opportunities, for water, toilets, electricity ...,' the Viking group rejoiced. Still, while access to electricity is widespread, the cost of electricity is worrying. Other inequalities also irk South Africans. Solar geysers (solar-powered water heaters) are being installed, but questions hover about why some people receive them and others do not. Participants across demographic and geographic locations also complained about electricity interruptions.

Uneven access to water and inequality in sewerage and toilet services are often seen as evidence of poor realization of equality in human rights. As the Makana group argued, 'if we are using the bucket system, if people are equal then everyone should be using it....' Improvements in sanitary services are marred by uneven experiences and many sub-standard systems. There are blockages, toilet mechanisms that fail and water supply interruptions.

### ***Regular water, but often polluted***

*'We have water within our reach now, so we don't have to walk a long distance anymore.'* (Jozini)

*'We have water; we have a sewerage system....'* (Barberton)

*'Water is dirty ... and this is the first part of health care, to get clean water.'* (Richards Bay)

*'In [some areas] sewerage floats around; they don't have toilets or drains yet....*

*There are a lot of diseases that the people can get.'* (Makana)

*'There is always a shortage of water, and when we get the water it will be full of chemicals, or muddy.'* (Theunissen)

### **Toilets ... with blockages**

*'You could not flush them before; they were just buckets....' (Whittlesea)*

*'We don't like the bucket system, they take so long to come and collect them.' 'Pipes have been installed for the toilets, but there are still no toilets.' 'The government put toilets here in Gini, but there is not always water....' (Makana)*

*'There are areas where people still use the bucket system, now that is way too backward in this day and age.' (Barberton)*

*'They build flushing toilets for us, but they are forever blocked, plastic, poor quality.' (Theunissen)*

### **Electricity ... and shifting targets**

*'It makes us happy these days that they are installing electricity for us.... Now the way of living is better, because we have lights.' (Whittlesea)*

*'They discriminate in bringing in the solar geyser, every house was supposed to get it. It is because we are poor, they think we are lowly.' (Zeerust)*

*'Don't come and promise me the moon and the stars if you have no intention of also replacing my old geyser with one of those solar panels that you see along the N2.' (Cape Town-MM)*

*'I am not saying that things were better under apartheid, but their power stations supplied everyone ... and now we are in shortage.' (Emalahleni)*

### **Land**

None of the groups passionately insisted on regaining the land that had been appropriated wrongly in the preceding political eras, although there is an emotional connection to the issue. When prompted to rank land reform and restitution amongst issues to which the government needs to attend urgently, land slotted behind job creation and a wide range of social service delivery items, including for the historically disadvantaged, black-African participants. Several groups' participants noted with appreciation ongoing land restitution initiatives, but they themselves were not involved. They endorsed the unfolding processes, and see the policy of returning land to be dispossessed as important evidence of the turn from apartheid. However, some related that they had heard about payments being made in the process of having land returned or granted. They suspected the payment is linked to corruption.

In rural settlements (such as in Jozini) female participants talked about access to land for growing food. Small town communities, and especially women there, reported a desire to grow food but said they do not have the land to do so. They said they would have to negotiate with the municipality, and would have to pay – with money they do not have (Barberton). The Whittlesea women have been involved in vegetable growing on available land but now need support from the municipality to resuscitate the project.

### **Land justice generally seen to be done**

*'The people who lost their farms a long time ago, they are still fighting for those farms; they are still in the hands of the people that stole them.' (Makana)*



*'Now you have the right to claim land that was taken from you in the past, you can go to Land Affairs and they have the lawyers....' (Thokoza)*

*'The fact that we have only moved 5 percent of the land to black control in 20 years is an indictment.'* (Executive)

*'The government has to rely on people to implement the policies, but corruption is so rife. Now you have to pay R800 if you want land of your own.'* 'In Gobela it is happening, people are getting reinstated on their land.... We did fill in forms and they promised we would be reinstated, but now they are saying we have to pay.' (Jozini)

*'We were living in fear of the Boers [whites under apartheid] chasing us away [from the land where we erected informal dwellings]. Then the municipality intervened and it was formalized.'* (Barberton)

## 2.5 Economic freedom with unemployment

The discussions show strong resentment of government not doing enough to bring home economic liberation in the form of jobs. This sentiment is particularly strong amongst unemployed black-African citizens, but young minority groups also tell of their challenges to find any or any meaningful employment, and all racial groups, ages and genders shared details of unemployment-related suffering that they experienced or observed. As a result, being unemployed has lost its stigma, as it could happen to anyone. The discussions illustrate the perceptions of surviving amidst unemployment:

- Participants from both black-African and some minority group backgrounds referred to surviving on a combination of grants and piecemeal jobs, or remissions from children and grandchildren who are employed or receive grants.
- Some in these groups, mostly black-African participants, said that people should stop complaining and demanding jobs from government: they themselves should take the responsibility and start small enterprises.
- Others pointed out that educational opportunities, including skills courses, abound; but some lamented that they do not have the money for transport to attend.
- Participants welcomed the opportunity for jobs linked to public works programs, even if these are short-term contracts.
- Some of the men had experiences showing that from as early as age 35, they run the risk of being considered too old for employment.
- Many consider small local or provincial tenders to help them on the road to better employment, but complain that when they approach the (corrupt) authorities, 'all they ask is, how much do you have?'
- Others, often from the minority groups, related experiences of relatively minor administrative or survivalist small enterprise operations.

### **Liberation, what liberation?**

*'You volunteer for years and years, and then other people get the job.'* (Barberton)

*'There are job opportunities, even though it's mainly volunteer work ... but then we can't all have jobs now, can we?'* (Jozini)

*'They [government] are not doing their jobs, liberating us from this economic struggle we are in at the moment.'* (Bloemfontein)

#### **Comparisons with jobs in the time of apartheid**

*'As long as people do not have money to buy bread like we did in 1974, then we still do not have economic freedom.'* (Diepsloot)

*'The Boers were guilty of apartheid, but when it came to things of employment the jobs were permanent.'* (Modimolle)

*'These days there are no jobs like back then in apartheid times. Factories have closed....'* (Viking)

*'During apartheid people at least had jobs. Even though it wasn't easy, at least they had an income.'* (Dysselsdorp)

#### **Self-criticisms on getting employed – we want more and more and more**

*'No-one volunteered when we were asked to avail ourselves for security [a community initiative]; all that we asked was how much we would be paid....'* (Khayelitsha)

*'We did things when we were under apartheid. We did not just go, "We were previously disadvantaged," and that's it.'* (Durban)

*'They want more and more and more.... People get, but they are never satisfied. They've become greedy.'* (Garies)

*'I think democracy has made us lazy.... Why can't we, the citizens of this country, do things for ourselves?' (Emalahleni)*

Nationalization of mines is not considered the magical cure that will deliver South Africa from poverty, but some participants wondered if it would help create jobs. The idea of having black people in control of these assets generally appeals. However, participants notably from black-African backgrounds doubt that sufficient capacity exists to effectively manage nationalized resources (farms and mines), keep them profitable and generate sustainable employment. They also wonder how much more corruption and nepotism there would be in the event of nationalization.

#### ***The problem of politicians and hollow job promises***

The discussions reveal the extent to which unfulfilled promises of job creation are creating deep discontent in South African society. The theme was ever-present. Citizens noted that the government has announced plans for and specifically promised jobs on many occasions, and nothing has materialized. Only a small number of participants (Richards Bay, for example) talked about having benefitted from government job creation initiatives, including through public works and the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) – as it relates to the new black elite –entered the discussions, except on the executive level. One Executive group participant was involved in a lucrative deal. The Cape Town-MM group thought BEE is a good idea, but felt that too much had been squeezed into too short a period.

### **Hollow job promises**

*'They tell the youth they will be getting jobs, but then we wait for a whole year, go to another meeting and we are told the same thing again.'* (Makana)

*'Our president makes all these empty promises about jobs, and all he does is focus on his personal politics.'* (Cape Town-MM)

*'It is bad that Msholozhi is promising us thousands of jobs ... and we are left without jobs.'* (Whittlesea)

### **Unemployment and cronyism**

The discussions exposed deeply entrenched perceptions across all group parameters that positions or 'opportunities' are being scooped up by political leaders and those close to them. This deepens the discontent about empty job promises. Black-African citizens see themselves losing out and the gap between rich and poor widening all around them.

Participants reported that by the time positions are announced, they are likely already to have been filled by politicians' friends and relatives, who are even 'imported' from other areas. Residents of small towns said it has become necessary for them to migrate to the cities, because no jobs are available locally. Both minority communities and black-African participants spoke of their frustrations with not being part of perceived insider groups that obtain jobs.

### **Resentment of jobs for the pals of the powerful**

*'You apply for a job, you have the credentials, but you don't stand a chance.... Politicians look after themselves, their own family, their personal friends and those they favor.'* (Garies)

*'Municipal employees abuse their power ... I know her, or she is my family member, a job comes up, I tell her to apply, she gets the job....'* (Thokoza)

*'You apply for a job, you get there, the person hiring already has the job for someone he knows.... My CV does not matter if I don't know the person who is hiring.'* (Richards Bay)

*'If you are not ANC you need not even apply for the job.'* (Garies)

*'If you don't know anyone in the high places, forget about even getting a job.'* (Theunissen)

*'The people that have the connections get the jobs.'* (Makana)

### **Crime, and links to unemployment**

Pervasive crime has changed the fiber of South African society, and the connection between unemployment and crime is widely recognized. 'South Africa is overwhelmed by crime', said a Khayelitsha participant, and groups from all demographic backgrounds, across the provinces, echoed the distress.

Most of the discussions included heart-breaking stories on community crime and drugs. The exceptions were a few of the communities from rural settings like Sannieshof and Heidedal, or in metropolitan Bloemfontein.

Some expressed sympathy for those who commit crime for income (and to support their families) when they are unable to find jobs, but others noted that does not make it more acceptable when you are on the receiving end. Many individuals and families live with crime perpetrators in their midst. Participants talked about their suspicions that their own children may be involved in crime, and others acknowledged that 'perhaps' they have purchased stolen goods ('the prices were very low'). Many said the government should take the link between unemployment and crime far more seriously.

The Makana group illustrates the problem of crime having affected the fiber of South African democracy and the need for government to act:

*'Government must investigate what the situation is that led people to do crime; find out how many people are experiencing this.' 'If people sit at home doing nothing, they stop caring and do crime. This is the situation that must be investigated.' 'People don't always have the knowledge on how to make their lives better.' 'These days we don't trust one another anymore, so we don't do Ubuntu and you can't go to your neighbor for help anymore.'*

The Jozini women talked about exasperation with their own children 'do crime':

*'If our kids could just take whatever jobs are available, even if it is just helping the neighbor erect a fence for a little money, there would be less crime.' 'Even if we are doing all that we can for our kids, feed them so that they never go hungry, they still get out there and get up to no good.'*

### **Drugs, alcohol, gangs and crime**

Crime (particularly burglary, theft and assault), widespread drug abuse, gangsterism and lack of jobs or good jobs (across age categories) are four of the most commonly raised problems of the new South African society. Ill-discipline and teenage pregnancy add to the burden. When asked to describe life in present-day South Africa in one, top-of-mind word, whether in their local communities or nationally, the groups almost invariably started with 'crime' (Table 2). The bulk of the focus group participants told distressing stories that involve crime and drugs in their communities

Participants talked about severe social disintegration in the face of unemployment: 'Look at us, the young people, we are turning to drugs, to alcohol, we are stealing, we are committing crimes, we have nothing to keep us busy, and the government does not create jobs for us', said the Dispatch group. Groups across demographic divides expressed the sentiment that 'there is no safety and security'. The Pilot group observed, 'we are always on edge'. It was reported that youths involved in gangsterism do not care about getting into trouble: 'they are not scared of the police anymore' (Dysselsdorp). In many places, crime and drugs was described as the youth culture. 'If you don't do drugs you are not in', said a young man from Garies. It was notable that that the drugs-crime theme was central (although not exclusive) to the colored-background groups of Dispatch, Garies and Dysselsdorp.

On a more hopeful note, the Pilot group observed that 'youth are starting to pick up their lives. In Johannesburg you see these young guys in parks smoking weed, but you go to other places and see

guys younger than me saying, “I want to be a lawyer”, “I want to be the president to change this country” ....’

### **Drugs, crime, unemployment and youth**

*‘We have no facilities where I live, and this is where the drugs come in....’ ‘Most of the people I admire do drugs and crime, and so I lose hope.’ (Richards Bay)*

*‘These kids can get drugs like weed at school.’ ‘The crime rate is increasing, because our children are passing [school], but struggle to get jobs.’ (Whittlesea)*

*‘Unemployment is not the only reason for crime, it is drugs too. Some of these youngsters don’t even want to work, because they see it as a waste of time working when they could be using that time to feed their horrible habit.’ (Khayelitsha)*

*‘Gang leaders ... target our sons, to induct them into gang culture.’ (Theunissen)*

Law and order are often seen as being in a state of collapse. Police, these citizens believe, are not really interested in community crime problems. In fact, participants suspect that they are complicit in many crimes. ‘There is no value in the type of police we have, most of them are accomplices with thieves’, argues a Khayelitsha participant (see Section 3).

## Section 3: Political system, leaders and the institutions of South African democracy

- 3.1 Introduction and synopsis of findings
- 3.2 Longing for the 'Mandela democracy'
- 3.3 The trusted parent, with mixed feelings
- 3.4 Experiences and impressions of national, provincial and local government
- 3.5 Public service across the levels of government
- 3.6 Political executive, Public Protector and Constitutional Court
- 3.7 Police and the court system – crises of confidence

### 3.1 Introduction and synopsis of findings

The grassroots assessment of the operation of South Africa's political system appears bleak. Across the demographic and geographic divides, the citizens in these discussions find the institutions that are designed to be close and accessible to them – the legislative institutions across the three levels of government – to be distant and unresponsive. Their top leaders are perceived as looking after their own and enriching themselves, rather than helping the communities. Political leadership in the minds of these participants has become synonymous with corruption. Meanwhile, crime is pervasive and debilitating, yet the communities do not trust the police to take action to ensure their safety.

In contrast, some participants described their relationship to the government in terms of a caring parent that has the obligation to look after their needs. These participants were from black-African background and often from the lower socio-economic echelons. They see benevolence and perceive a direct relationship to a government that is largely ANC. Participants literally ignored their own severe criticisms of government and talked about this parent (in effect the same government) that they believe will deliver more and better.

The main findings explored in this section are:

- Citizens find that their legislative institutions, designed to interact with and represent them, are ineffectual, distant and unresponsive. They are intensely critical of all three levels of government: national, provincial and local.
- The 'caring parent' image filters into relationships with representatives. Many citizens feel that even if specific institutions fail them, government is still a benevolent, caring figure. It is evident that when they talk about specifics of the system they have a tendency to condemn them, but that these specifics have largely not (yet) spilt over into their feelings about their relationship with the ANC (Section 5).
- Citizens who live in (desperate or relative) poverty believe that leaders use public positions to look after their own pockets; in comparison the citizens feel neglected, if not wronged.

- The performance of top political leaders in the country is seen as lackluster.
- The Public Protector is praised for her anti-corruption work, but citizens are concerned that she operates against the odds and with obstacles in her way.
- The South African police is seen as perversely corrupt and in cahoots with criminals. The distrust of the court system is profound, although somewhat less so than of the police.

People generally have the idea that there is a core system of government that works procedurally, and that processes – even if flawed – can be expected to take place in predictable ways. All participants accepted that at least some service delivery will occur, and that many policies will be implemented, even if public institutions are dismally unresponsive and under-performing. This is despite the fact that when it comes to perceptions of the integrity of public institutions, all groups converged in their doubts and criticisms.

### 3.2 Longing for the days of ‘Mandela democracy’

The euphoria, idealism and sense of achievement of 1994 in South Africans’ minds are no more: 2013 is a different time, with different leaders. Citizens see the apartheid era as firmly behind them and their new government as generally sympathetic, even if aloof and often distant. Nevertheless, the focus group participants – and in particular those from black-African backgrounds – expect more from their government. Intensely cynical as they are, the participants still believe that this government will make things better. It is citizens’ hope for better days that sustains the current government in power.

There is deep nostalgia for the days of ‘Mandela democracy’; the flaws and debates of that era have since faded. The contrast between the Mandela era and the current leadership feeds dissatisfaction with the current government. Credit for achievements often goes to ‘the previous’ ANC government. For example, the Makana gives credit to Mandela and ‘we, the people in the community, who stood up for our rights’. The Cape Town minority group praises Mandela, stressing the good that he did for them and their communities.

Corruption and greed are seen to have infected the post-Mandela era and particularly the current government. The words from black-Africans indicate that much of the preceding trust in government has lapsed.

#### **Mandela era comparisons**

*‘...as young people we are confused as to what is happening to that freedom that Mandela started with.’ (Diepsloot)*

*‘I would say the ANC should get the credit for the things that have changed, but [that credit is for] the previous one; the current is the one that is bringing more corruption to this country.’ (Emalahleni)*

*‘When Mandela was in power they cared for the people; now it is for their own pockets and their own money. Everyone wants to be in power for their own fame and fortune.’ (Pilot)*

*‘[Mandela] was considerate and concerned about the nation; he was not concerned about only his family. He was looking out for the whole South Africa....’ ‘Those that came after him [Mandela] will never compare, they will never do as much for us as he did.’ (Hammanskraal)*

*'Since Mandela left office there has been a lot of corruption, gravy trains and all those kinds of things, so we have lost the touch we had in 1994.'* (Heidedal)

*'We are actually afraid of what will happen when Mandela dies.'* (Dispatch)

### **3.3 The trusted parent, with mixed feelings**

The image of South Africa's democratic government as the caring parent, looking after its citizen-children, filtered into many of the discussions. A range of groups across mid-class and lower LSM categories related their relationship with government as a 'trusted parent' who is looking after its 'children'. 'We are government's children', said the lower-LSM women of Jozini. Even when the term 'the parent' was not directly used, the trust that the bulk of the citizens, in particular but not only black-African citizens, harbor towards the democratic government infused virtually all of the discussions.

However, and even more frequently, the participants revealed mixed feelings about the parent. Jozini and the rest of the groups intensely debated the extent to which they could and should rely on this government-parent to look after their every need. Many citizens have a mantra of 'nothing is happening' or 'deliver more and better', always expecting more and insisting on more. It is government's responsibility to elevate them, they argued. Some assume this attitude because they are truly trapped in conditions of unemployment and poverty. Others, like the mid-class LSM Thokoza women, criticized their compatriots for 'sitting at home and doing nothing' or 'staying at home and then complaining that there is nothing out there, waiting for government to come....'

#### **The caring parent**

*'We are always waiting for what the government can do for us.'* (Jozini)

*'In South Africa, even if you do not have money ... they will always provide what you need, based on your needs.'* (Richards Bay)

#### **Mixed feelings about the parent**

*'When you are promised something, even by your parent, and it does not happen, you lose your trust in them. If government sees that a promise will not happen they must communicate early.'* (Makana)

*'We have chosen this person to be our leader. He got into a good position and makes good money because of us, but he fails to look out for us.'* (Hammanskraal)

*'No matter how out-of-control your child is, you are not going to throw him/her out. It's the same with the ANC government....'* (Barberton)

#### **Fading patience for the parent to get it right**

*'The promises are not met and that is when people lose hope. When they were promised things they were excited and had energy ... but that fades and people lose hope.'* (Makana)

*'We are on the third president of the democratic country now and we should be seeing change very fast; yet, we're still stumbling and nothing is really happening.'* (Khayelitsha)



*'South Africans have patience, but 20 years is a long time,  
some people don't even live for 20 years.'* (Dispatch)

*'Apartheid was there for a long time ... but if government cannot get it together in 20 years they will  
never get it together'* (Pilot)

### ***The parent and the government of the rich***

In one of the paradoxical trends in the study, people across the range of 'ordinary' communities see the parent political leaders and those connected to them – their friends, family and other business associates – as living the good life. In contrast, they see themselves as cared for through grants, some free water and electricity, quite often RDP houses, access to free education and modest health care.

The Sannieshof group describes the 'ANC as the party for the rich and those who want to be rich':

*'If you want to be rich, join the ANC.' 'The people of the ANC go [into government] with the intention of making money, and they do not share with others who need to survive. Individuals benefit, instead of us all as a nation.' 'There is not enough money for service delivery, because they have accumulated the funds for their own use.'*

### **The political class and inequality before the law**

*'[A former high level politician] is out of jail now because he has oodles of cash.'*  
*'If you don't have money you rot in jail.'* (Barberton)

*'Like ministers or whoever, if they commit a crime and go to jail, they will be out before you know it. But if it is someone like me, it does not matter if it is a minor offence.... The sentence will be harsh.'* *'The hot shots are allowed out of jail to consult their own doctors.'* (Thokoza)

*'Just because we call our government democratic it does not mean that it is.'* (Pilot)

*'There are pockets of people trying to do the right thing, but there are bigger muscles that squash them.... People are feeling helpless. You can see that Mr. X has stuffed up and he is going to get off the hook – you know nothing is going to happen and ... there is no recourse.'* (Executive)

### **Leaders, unemployment and corruption**

*'There is corruption everywhere.... People have big positions, but they will still engage in corruption – corruption that costs those of us who do not even have jobs.'* *'They [local leaders] say it to our faces; they tell us that for as long as they rule here nobody will tell them anything; they say that in any project that comes up here they get first preference.'* (Hammanskraal)

*'Money is being abused by those right at the top, so that is why the ones at the bottom are also abusing money.'* *'We understand ... that money is Satan, but [the leaders] must control themselves.'* (Makana)

### 3.4 Experiences and impressions of national, provincial and local government

National, provincial and local government in South Africa all suffer pervasive criticism, extending across participants' provincial, racial, class and political party boundaries. The discussions revealed a frequent consensus that problems with government are deep and widespread. Citizen attitudes are nevertheless complex. They often argued that top leadership and national government are less responsible for corruption and inefficiencies than provincial and local government. However, when they focused specifically on national government, they were devastatingly critical.

Direct exposure to and observation of local government, politicians and officials often predisposed them to the severest of the critiques. Media coverage of the presence or absence of other elected representatives also empower them to form their own judgments (Table 3). Pro-ANC participants were frequently extreme in their criticisms of the self-serving nature of their own public representatives. The ratio of negative to positive in the quotations below reflects the balance in the discussions.

#### National – parliament and its MPs

*'They [the people in parliament] are the people who get paid for nothing.'* (Heidedal)

*'We just see them fighting, but we do not know what they are fighting for.'* (Richards Bay)

*'These people don't come to see us.'* (Whittlesea)

*'I think of MPs, I think of Hugo Boss, Gucci, those expensive brands. They sit around a table and agree to disagree, get up and go on holiday, or change into a fancy suit for the next red carpet event.'*

*'Once they have that power [of being MPs] they forget the prime reason they are there for....*

*They think they are there for their own personal whatever.'* (Cape Town-MM)

*'There is no-one behind the wheel.... They throw things at one another, I mean, they are supposed to be our leaders.'* (Pietermaritzburg)

*'They vote to make sure they form the majority, but sometimes majority just means that all fools are on one side.'* (Hammanskraal)

*'They are using state money in a wrongful manner.'* *'We know about them, but we never interact with them.'* *'I know one specifically who started from nothing, and as soon as she made it she started buying cars and stuff and you know how the story goes from there.'* (Emalahleni)

*'The only time I saw him [an MP] was when he came to check on his girlfriend....*

*I have never seen him participate in anything in the community.'* (Richards Bay)

#### Compliments for MPs

*'Our current MP is very active. If there is a need somewhere he will go out of his way to address it. He is a man that keeps his promises.'* *'He is visible. If you invite him to speak at a meeting, he will be there.'* *'He is a man of his word.'* (Garies)

### **Provincial – provincial legislatures and their MPLs**

*'Some of them in this provincial government ... even as a layman you can see the corruption. These people are getting richer, they are working for their families; they are not prepared to work for the people. They are just fooling us, making it seem like they are working, going to do this, going to create those jobs....' 'When you go to the provincial, it is sad, they don't care about anybody.'* (Heidedal)

*'They are like tools and puppets for the higher authority. They will say what the minister might not want to say, or they will enforce something....'* (Pietermaritzburg)

### **Compliments for MPLs**

*'They [Western Cape provincial government, under DA majority] make the most noise for human rights.'* (Cape Town-MM)

### **Local – municipal councils and their councilors**

*'Local government is where the problems are.' 'The councilor is not in the community. You phone him, his phone is off....' 'When you go to the municipality looking for help, you can see the unwillingness to help you.'* (Heidedal)

*'The local councilor knows about our problems with water supply, but is too busy getting rich.'* (Makana)

*'Once they have our vote they leave us here and move to town.'* (Modimolle)

*'He is the one that says, I cannot do anything [about your problem] because this or this or this will happen to me.'* (Durban)

*'We hear nothing from our councilor. We get our information from those in the rural areas.'* (Khayelitsha)

*'All I hear are negative things ... so why would I go out to get to know him if he does not care about the community?'* (Richards Bay)

*'They speak with no actions.' 'They make a lot of promises with no change.' 'They should send our councilors on courses where they can learn how to treat money.'* (Whittlesea)

### **A few good councilors and sympathy**

*'There is one I know, you will always find him in his office; even if you are not from his ward he will still find a way to help you.'* (Dispatch)

*'At least the one in Extension 10 is doing something ... but he took people from Extension 7 to go and work on the electricity; he should have helped his own ward.'* (Modimolle)

*'You live in the community like a normal resident ... and when the state doesn't provide certain services [the community] blames you as though you are the one that is responsible for misusing the funds.'* (Emalahleni)

**Table 3:**  
**South Africa's representative institutions in one word or phrase**

<b>Parliament / Members of Parliament</b>	Corrupted, lazy, rubber stamp, misuse of power, fighting, dodgy, fashion, greedy, selfish, pawns of parties, uninformed, fraud, jokers, chaotic, circus, 'scream, shout and fight', 'get paid too much for doing nothing', 'I just see them on TV', 'I don't know them'.
<b>Provincial legislature / Members of the Provincial Legislature</b>	Corrupt, invisible, cabal, 'caught for fraud and corruption', 'we don't know them', joke, 'they don't have a clue', 'maybe they work behind the scenes'.
<b>Local government / Councilors</b>	Favoritism, 'we don't know who they are', 'I don't know my councilor', 'he switches off his phone', corruption, selfish, invisible, poor services.

In a small number of cases the South Africans in these groups also came up with cautions against condemning local councilors. They observed that councilors are expected to bear too much of the brunt of what is going wrong in government in general.

### 3.5 Public service across the levels of government

The civil service and its municipal counterparts emerge with severe condemnations for work not very well done, empathy not shown, or non-existent interest in the 'customer'. The negative perceptions (as in the case of those of MPs, MPLs and councilors) overwhelm the positives. The few positives that were offered are recorded here. As in all comparable situations in the discussions, the moderators prompted participants specifically for both good and bad experiences and impressions. Obviously, indirect assessments are also important – wherever some services and social grants were received some public service had been rendered. Participants mostly did not express opinions on this indirect type of service, but rather focused on the quality of the reception and service when they directly engaged with public servants and municipal officials.

#### **National civil service / government departments**

*'If you go to SASSA you will see there is no shortage of staff, but they will make you wait all day and there is nothing you can do about it.'* (Jozini)

*'They try to deliver a service, but if the captain of the ship is not driving the ship properly, then the workers cannot deliver.'* (Pietermaritzburg)

*'If it is break time, it is break time; they will not help you.'* (Durban)

Many of the groups expressed strikingly similar views including 'we do not have something like civil service' and 'They do as they please'. Also frequently heard in these groups were: 'service is not great', 'no discipline', 'inefficient' and 'corruption'.

### Provincial government departments

*'We go for tenders and they just want to know how much we have [to give to them].'* (Modimolle)

*'They attend to us, no complaints here.'* *'They direct you to where you need to go, and you get assistance.'* (Barberton)

The following comments were repeated in a large number of group discussions on provincial government departments: *'Poor performance', 'waiting not doing', 'empty promises', 'we don't know anything about them', 'pathetic, corrupt, 'hands are tied', 'lack of resources'.*

### Local municipality

Discussions on local municipalities also produced a frequent convergence of views, such as:

*'Disorganized, uncaring, arrogant', 'long lunches', 'ignore us', 'didn't go to school to get their jobs', 'we don't ever see them', 'they pitch for work at whatever time they like', 'ignore you when you get to the front of the queue', 'eating money', 'they don't care', 'Mickey Mouse', 'greedy, lazy, corruption'.*

## 3.6 Political executive, Public Protector and Constitutional Court

The political executive, in particular South Africa's president and deputy president, emerge with verdicts that raise serious questions about credibility and acceptability. The president receives much ridicule and a small number of credits; the deputy president is a virtually unknown entity. The Public Protector, in contrast, receives warm accolades for helping citizens to hold their government to account. The exact work of the Constitutional Court is poorly known, but participants have a generally favorable impression – except when they lump it together with the rest of the judicial system. They vilify the court system, most of all because it is seen as complicit in crime.

### ***The political executive***

The political executive of the South African government emerge with lackluster ratings and are mocked. Negatives abound. Below the presidential level, impressions become vague and ambiguous.

With reference to recent high profile corruption scandals, the bulk of participants almost invariably across political, racial and class divides displayed a lack of respect for and confidence in the highest levels of government leadership in South Africa. Responses specifically on the deputy president of South Africa reveal confusion as to who holds the office. The 'Cabinet' is something on which people have few opinions.

### Cabinet

*'The cabinet needs to be changed; they are not doing the best for the country – they are doing the best for themselves.'* (Richards Bay)

*'This thing about the ministers, I just do not understand it. It would be good to have a person with background in the right area.'* (Thokoza)

### **Constitutional Court**

Even if quite a number of participants accurately denoted the Constitutional Court the highest court in the land (for example in the Garies and Pretoria groups), there is little knowledge of the structure, hierarchies and roles of the judicial system and how the different courts relate to one another. One of the few groups that did not use standard terms like 'circus' and 'corrupt' to describe several of the institutions, Khayelitsha, noted that it is where 'law is established' and that it 'enforces law'.

#### **Reflections on the Constitutional Court**

*'The Constitutional Court works for those with money.' 'It is both good and bad – the big bosses never go down for their deeds.'* (Hammanskraal)

*'That is the place where people's fates are decided.'* (Khayelitsha)

### **Public Protector**

Participants widely lauded the Public Protector, Advocate Thuli Madonsela, for 'work that is done to help protect South Africa's democracy'. Corruption is regarded as a primary threat and her work is seen as unambiguously anti-corruption. Although not consistently across all groups, the office is widely known, and the public protector was often identified by name.

She was generally recognized for her work in building democracy. Several of the groups were aware of the Public Protector's campaign to visit communities and hear about the problems and issues experienced on the ground. Participants in the Barberton group spoke about the protector's visit to hear about problems with poverty, unemployment and service delivery. Citizens applauded her for caring about people and addressing problems with government *from within government*.

Black-African participants, across LSM and urban-rural differences, recognized that the Public Protector often works against the odds and with obstacles in her way. The groups talked about the investigations that take off despite efforts by government to sweep corruption under the carpet. They were aware of threats against the Public Protector, efforts to undermine the position and the specific work of the incumbent. Madonsela, however, does not escape criticism – several groups accused her of protecting the president too much. They also observed that some sensitive cases with high-flyers as actors tend to take time to come to fruition.

#### **Credit for digging up dirt**

*'With good work like this corruption will decrease and we will know where we are going.'* (Viking)

*'Her work will deter other people from engaging in corruption.'* (Jozini)

*'She opens up dark spots that people try and cover up. And she doesn't take sides.'* (Bloemfontein)

*'If she sees something is wrong she is going to get into it ... It says on this piece of paper "20 loaves of bread", but there are only five, so what happened to the others?'* (Dispatch)

*'The Public Protector came here once ... we actually met them at the offices.'* *'They were asking questions about the sort of problems we may be encountering.'* (Barberton)

*'The investigations take so long ... but she will tell the people the truth.'* *'She is doing a good job in finding out things about corrupt officials and ministers.'* *'Having her is one of the good things this government has done.'* (Thokoza)

*'She inspects projects where money disappears; things that we do not have [direct] knowledge of.'* (Garies)

*'There are things we would not know about without her work, like how the education funds vanished, and the things with the transport tenders.'* (Viking)

*'She is after the truth; she is after corruption at all cost.'* (Zeerust)

#### **Limits to what the Public Protector can do**

*'Not all is revealed, not everyone gets exposed.'* (Barberton)

*'...I think she is suppressing the information that we want to know as South Africans.'* (Thokoza)

*'There are issues that she is afraid to follow up properly; she only investigates.'* (Hammanskraal)

#### **Reports of threats against the Public Protector**

*'Whoever appointed her now threatens her along the way.'* (Theunissen)

*'It is good and not good at the same time; they could get rid of her, they could kill her.'* (Heidedal)

### **3.7 Police and the court system – crises of confidence**

Overwhelmingly negative perceptions of police corruption are one of the core findings of this project – it is pervasive, incriminating and disconcerting. The court system also comes under fire, largely but not only because of perceived corruption of case investigations and evidence. Many citizens believe that equality before the law dissipates when police and criminals appear on the scene (Table 5 summarizes the diffusion of this crisis; many others shared the sentiments).

#### ***Personal safety as a compromised human right***

Crime compromises the quality of life for all participants across all demographic and geographic divides. They are affected in their homes, on the streets, in shopping and banking areas and in places of work. Only a handful of groups (Sannieshof, Bloemfontein, Modimolle, Heidedal and Zeerust) felt that crime is not as serious an issue where they live. In all other discussions the issue of crime was omnipresent.

#### **Crime, the Constitution and compromised human rights**

*'The level of crime is not decreasing and the courts do not do much, so my right to freedom is not well protected.'* (Makana)

*'We are not saying hanging should be reinstated [for rape convictions], but we need strict sentencing ... and not good food and television in prison.'* (Whittlesea)

*'You feel trapped when you are walking in the street; you must always look over your shoulder when you are at the bank.'* (Dispatch)

*'If I am not safe, I am in fact discriminated against – my dignity is not respected.'* (Durban)

*'Our constitution has shot itself in the foot, giving people so much freedom. It's all about human rights, it's almost saying criminals, you can do what you want, nothing can be done to you.'* (Durban)

**Table 4:**  
**Crisis of confidence in the South African Police Service – select observations**

<b>Heidedal</b>	'What is happening in the police is happening in the ruling party ... they are killing each other.' 'I am scared of them.'
<b>Hammanskraal</b>	'We are targeted, victimized by the Metro police, they are destroying small business initiatives.' 'Killings have the hand of police in them.'
<b>Thokoza</b>	'We lodge our complaints at the police station, but nothing happens.'
<b>Pilot</b>	'They pretend to look after the people but they are corrupt.' 'Many have criminal records.'
<b>Jozini</b>	'The police themselves scare us.' 'The police themselves are criminals.' 'If I was broken into I won't report to the police, because they may have been involved.'
<b>Richards Bay</b>	'We have no respect for the police.' 'They make wrong decisions.' 'They take too many bribes.' 'They beat people up.' 'You are frightened ... when you see them.'
<b>Barberton</b>	'They have been known to rape women.' 'They are willing to make a case disappear if you pay them' 'They keep evidence from the courts.... Files get eaten by the dog.'
<b>Emalahleni</b>	'People don't know their rights and are intimidated by the cops....' 'I don't think the police are to be trusted.'
<b>Zeerust</b>	'They are lazy.' 'They always come late, even for the dying.'
<b>Garies</b>	'They look after us, but not all the time, because they are so corrupt.' 'The types of things they do worry us.'
<b>Cape Town-MM</b>	'They are often too scared to go into a situation, because they are not allowed to shoot to defend themselves.'
<b>Khayelitsha</b>	'How do you think drugs are brought into jails? The police bring them in.' 'They are very abusive.'

### ***Inequality and corruption at the hands of the police and the courts***

'Corruption' is the word that regularly and systematically leaped out of participants' mouths when asked for a word that they associate with the police. The South African Police Service suffers a severe crisis of community confidence. What matters is not what you do, say these citizens, but rather whom you know in the police or in political ranks above the police. The outcome also depends upon how much money you have to impress the police and get immunity, or arrange a better deal for yourself in the face of your transgression.

The distrust in the court system is profound, although somewhat less so than in policing. The citizens in this study, again across all demographic boundaries, only occasionally described the court system as corrupt, but frequently believed it is inept and incapable of dealing with crime and justice. This main dysfunction in the court system is in its link to the police. There they see poor investigations and dockets disappearing, along with the ability of the rich to buy themselves out of problems.

Communities consequently believe that criminals have come to have far more rights than the law-abiding citizenry. They rely on 'self-justice' (impromptu community action against the perpetrators). They often do not bother to report their problems with crime to the police anymore. The words of the Khayelitsha group illustrate the self-justice choice:

*'Here in the township the residents will catch the criminal and try to keep the criminal from running by beating him up ... while the police are taking their time to arrive. And when the*



*police come the people get arrested, and even get jailed. No-one really wants to be part of the community policing forum or the neighborhood watch, because they have to work with the police....'*

Another problem is sentencing, which is seen as too lenient. Much of the lack of judicial fairness is linked to corruption in the police, but it also extends into court operations and the system of sentencing and policies regarding imprisonment and parole.

#### **Multi-faceted crisis of confidence in the courts**

*'As a policeman I can escalate a case to the courts. But if that person is familiar with a high someone the case will vanish into thin air.'* (Hammanskraal)

*'It is difficult to rely on courts if they release criminals on bail, even if they have committed heinous crimes.'* (Jozini)

*'When a person murders another person they misuse the fact that they have human rights, to avoid being punished for their wrongful deeds.'* (Emalahleni)

*'You can rely on the courts to do their work. It is just that the process is going to take a long time.'* (Thokoza)

#### **Politics, the courts and inequality before the law**

*'If you have money you control the law.'* *'The Scorpions [special unit of the National Prosecuting Authority investigating organized crime and corruption, now disbanded] used to arrest people, whether they are in high places or not.... They were making progress and then the ANC decided to close them down, so now the Hawks [the police unit designated to carry on the work of the Scorpions] find that the ANC has to give approval for them to make arrests.'* (Richards Bay)

*'The courts are biased. [In the instance of] the president they act as though nothing has happened.'* *'It is hard to find a rich man behind bars.'* *'Those who get imprisoned file for medical parole.'* (Emalahleni)

#### **Favorable treatment of criminals and detainees**

Communities' own security and their own rights, they observe, are in jeopardy due to the rights that criminals are afforded. All communities are concerned about this, although lower socio-economic and township areas show greater vulnerability. In these areas the perpetrators are quite likely to be known to the rest of the residents. The community members see these persons being arrested, released on bail, and almost immediately roaming the streets again. In situations of far-reaching indignity, a few days after a rape or violent assault, burglary or theft, they will see the perpetrator going about his/her life again (mentioned, for example, in Makana).

#### **Sequence of crime-arrest-bail-release-in community again**

*'Nowadays people kill intentionally, get arrested, but are released on bail without even spending one night in jail.... That person is roaming our streets again.'* (Modimolle)

*'A rapist of a two-year old gets bail, he gets out and does it again, and gets bail again.... What does that tell you?'* (Dispatch)

*'We find a lot of women being raped. There were fewer rapes when people were hanged for this. In our system of government the courts release these people.'* (Whittlesea)

**The 'sought-after' life in prison**

*'You can murder somebody, you can rape somebody, you go sit in jail and there you will get free meals, health care, you can study and get a degree and access to television....'* (Durban)

*'People come out of jail after 20 years, but then do something to get back into the comfort of prison ... TV, three meals a day.'* (Makana)

## Section 4: Public participation, engagement with the system and the media

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- 4.1 Introduction and synopsis of main findings
- 4.2 Public participation, self-help and community help
- 4.3 Bottom-up perspectives on how the system of representation could work
- 4.4 Sympathy for protest and strike action
- 4.5 The mass media, political awareness and amplification of people's voices

### 4.1 Introduction and synopsis of main findings

Public participation in South Africa ebbs and flows. There is little indication at present of systematic mobilization by civil society and its organizations to influence the political system or lobby the authorities on issues of concern to multiple communities. The only exception to this rule is the widespread citizen endorsement of protest action. This mostly takes the form of community-based 'service delivery protests'.

The main findings explored in this section are:

- Small community groupings, along with individual initiatives, tackle personal security, community safety and occasionally developmental issues.
- The lack of trust in politicians' intentions, police integrity and the functionality of government bureaucracies dampen civil society's enthusiasm for joint initiatives with the authorities.
- Protest action to get better service delivery receives wide support. It attracts the attention of authorities more effectively than lobbying elected representatives.
- Citizens innovate bottom-up approaches to try to get their interests represented, putting together makeshift mechanisms, also relying on institutions that they have otherwise discredited, without guaranteed results.
- Participants credit the mass media for keeping them informed, making them national citizens, and helping them to keep government and its leaders accountable.

### 4.2 Public participation, self-help and community help

Small community groupings come together to take action on issues that affect personal security, community safety and mutual social benefit. There is little enthusiasm, however, for systematic community engagement with government. Communities also do not speak about specific government initiatives of this nature, to reach out and build forums in the communities. The lack of trust in politicians' intentions, police integrity and the functionality of government bureaucracies also stands in the way of closer cooperation.

The discussions, in particular in black-African groups, reveal that citizens often expect government to do things for them; they acknowledge continuously expecting more help from government. The black-African participants who do not partake in this 'more-more game' talk about those who always demand, sometimes greedily, other times in dependency or because they know how to work the system to their best advantage. Other participants, across racial designations, stress that they do not expect government to do everything. Rather, they just hope for small gestures to set the ball rolling and get people to cooperate around projects. 'We are waiting to help. We know that part of it is our responsibility.... But there is just not that top leadership that says, "OK, let's do it"', in the words of the Cape Town-MM group.

Security, communal finance and humanitarian initiatives are three broad categories in which South Africans engage in personal or community networks to help bring better conditions to themselves or the community. This range of civil society activities is not a predominant activity in people's lives, except possibly amongst women, and frequently black-African women who participate in stokvels and burial societies. The activities include the following:

- **Community policing forums** are used in many of the communities, across demographic differentiations. Others, however, report breakdowns in their relations with the police. They bluntly say that they do not trust the police enough (too much corruption) for them to become involved in joint initiatives. Others (including Garies) note unwillingness of the police to cooperate with the people in constituting forums. Modimolle participants say the police 'first sign the agreement and then come and arrest us'. Many do join forces in private neighborhood watch actions, 'in order to protect ourselves because the police are not protecting us' (Bloemfontein). The Barberton group reports that their forum is cooperating well and doing good work. A participant from Randburg (Pilot) noted that on his street there is a street captain with a phone line and he calls the police directly: 'We have a bit of a community going, but it is still not pleasant because it is crime that is uniting us'. In Whittlesea they note: 'We managed to put together a policing forum, to be able to work with the police on the crime that we experience. It has made a huge difference....' Some also relate that the community policing forums have been encouraging them to constitute block committees.
- **Joint action for self-improvement** is illustrated in the case of the women from Whittlesea. They talk about a shared project to cultivate land (but now need aid from the municipality to take it further). The Makana group notes the existence of their 'each one feeds one uprising', an organization focused on agriculture and development. The initiative has faltered, however, because 'people have the attitude of what is in it for me?' Others note their participation in a movement for unemployed people, although they do not hold out much hope for successful action. Modimolle people have tried planting vegetables for extra money, but say that 'those types of things don't work'. In Jozini the women speak of success in co-operatives growing food, 'with the help of the Department of Agriculture'.
- Several communities, especially the higher LSMs in the study, engage in **charitable organizations and actions**. The Dispatch and Durban groups talk about soup kitchens in which they participate. Women from Lenasia South and as part of the Minority Front party cook food for the informal settlement people over weekends (Johannesburg). The pilot group notes their involvement in church groups that help in skills development; another

works in a non-governmental organization (NGO) that supports children in sport. In Makana student groups assist school learners with extra after-school tuition. Jozini women say their church is the place where they get 'educated' through announcements, and they help the less fortunate. The Emalahleni group reports using sporting activities to get youth off the street.

- A range of the groups (Thokoza and Khayelitsha are examples) report that they belong to **stokvels and burial societies**. The mutual and shared advantages are that funerals become affordable, and caskets and catering can be purchased. Some women report belonging to more than one. People also contribute services like cooking, washing up and singing. The Thokoza women report a 'street group': when someone dies households in the street each contributes R10, perhaps to purchase soap. The Stinkwater group (Hammanskraal) reports that stokvels are what they are famous for in their community.
- Some groups report going onto **social networks** – Twitter and Facebook – to air complaints and demands for government action (like the Thokoza group). Others talk about using the internet for access to news, and to engage on debate lists. These actions for them substitute for joint community action, and they reckon it is at least as effective.
- There is also awareness from the communities' side of some level of **corporate social responsibility**, although these activities are not in the domain of community action. The Barberton group notes an initiative from a mining house to support schools. The Executive group reports actions that their own companies undertake.

Despite the inclination to turn to government, there is a desire for more opportunities to do things for themselves. The Thokoza group of young urban women argued against simply relying on government to do things. They wished they could have the resources or knowledge to do more for themselves: 'Like there are NGOs and BEEs, we just need to find information so that we can start doing things for ourselves'. This was in contrast with women's groups from, for example, Zeerust, Jozini and Whittlesea, where there is an expectation for government to come and make it all right.

Some participants have seen unrewarded efforts. The Emalahleni group speaks of a woman in their community who had developed a local park, fighting to make it look pretty. She did a great job – and then the councilor came and demanded that *she* take it over. 'This isn't right', they said.

#### Charitable work and self-help

*'If you want something in life you yourself have got to go and get it... I have adopted two black kids and they too cannot find work. One is a chef and now we have built him a kitchen to create employment, the second one fixes cars that I have bought....' 'I am doing alterations, I am baking ... my electricity account uses up most of my disability grant.'* (Pietermaritzburg)

*'Our wives take money from us every month to go and contribute to burial societies.'* (Khayelitsha)

### 4.3 Bottom-up perspectives on how the system of representation could work

This study's bottom-up perspective on 'how government works' or 'what works to get government to work for you' reveals a system which is a far cry from the accepted wisdom on political representation. This supposes that citizens elect their political party and its representatives, and that

these persons or parties then work on behalf of constituents to represent their interests in the national, provincial and local legislatures or councils. The study reveals that because elected representatives are failing to play this role, de facto substitute approaches are being developed by citizens. There are many different suggestions, besides protest, on how in South Africa's democratic system to draw attention to and get action on your problems. Table 6 offers a selection of these bottom-up stories of makeshift *political processes* to get representation. It captures suggestions on who in government would be responsible to help get action. It also tells the stories of frustrations with representation, closed doors and toy telephones.

**Table 5:**  
**Bottom-up suggestions to get voice and representation: how representation practically works in South Africa**

<b>Sannieshof</b>	'When something is not right, the government can send the mayors to attend to the problem.'
<b>Whittlesea</b>	'We vote for people within our community to represent us ... but then they forget about us.' 'We should take our issues up with the councilors, they should speak to government, because government won't know what is going on until we tell them.' 'We can call meetings and escalate any problems that we may have ... it is good that we have freedom of speech.' 'We also appreciate it when they come to us to hear our views.' 'If you want to start a small business you can go to the municipality, enquire and you might get a tender ... but the tenders are given to family members.' 'Our hope lies in our president Jacob Zuma. We hope that when we have problems we can have his number, call him and talk to him about our problems.'
<b>Thokoza</b>	'You write a petition, hand it to the legislature....' 'You can phone the president, but we don't know the number.' 'You can send the president an SMS, but he is not the one who is going to read it.' 'It means they did not pass on the complaints.'
<b>Makana</b>	'We need to know how to get things from government to make life better.... The government does not consult people, even with development.' 'When the community asks for a meeting with the municipality to discuss [the poor services] they tell you they are busy.' 'We make our request to the councilor and then the councilor will move it forward to the right people.' '... or voice it out on the community radio.'
<b>Theunissen</b>	'If we kick-start a project of our own first then government will enhance our initiative ... we do not just ask government to spoon-feed us.' 'Then we start at the local municipality until we reach the provincial government. We approach them physically and meet them face to face. Nowadays government has realized that it has to create committees that we can best approach to act as liaison between us and government.' 'I would make a call as well. Zuma has this line that goes directly to him.' 'We can write a letter of complaint.... They have boxes for those letters, like at the clinics.'
<b>Jozini</b>	'As its children the government should be doing things for us.... Here in our community we have seen projects being introduced, even though it's the municipality that brings them to us, but they are from the government itself.' 'I don't know whom to blame because we often have meetings with our councilor, s/he forwarded our requests but now nothing has actually happened.'
<b>Barberton</b>	'The municipality comes here to hear whatever complaints we may have. That is when we voice our grievances. Like we say we want asphalt but the government says their budget does not allow for that this year, and that they'll try to fit it in next year. So the following year we keep our eyes on them, see if they tar our roads.' 'If something goes wrong in your area [Public Protector Thuli] Madonsela will send her people to come and investigate.'

<b>Hammanskraal</b>	'There is a way of doing things. So before you are paid attention to at the [ANC] offices, you must have gone through this very same local councilor [the person who checks whether we speak out against the ANC].... There are problems that they look at and then they don't take them further.'
<b>Viking</b>	'If we have problems we go to our local councilor.'
<b>Diepsloot</b>	'Councilors are our link to communicate with government.... When it comes to delivery, councilors will call a general meeting and then they will come and talk to you.'
<b>Executive</b>	'We have professional associations that speak to the specific people in government.'

In several of the male groups (black-African background) the participants also speak about going to their political party's meetings to raise issues and express their needs. In most of these instances, however, they relate experiences of local factionalism and being marginalized in community meetings for not belonging to the in-group. With in-group status they report you will be given a fair chance to speak and you will be taken seriously. Without that, there is no chance to be heard.

Many of the improvised approaches for ensuring democratic representation are channeled through the local councilor (see Table 6, reflecting the actions in black-African communities and covering both urban and rural settings). This person is seen as primary actor to get things right, or to take the message up to higher government, to tell government what is happening locally. There are no mentions of provincial legislatures and parliament, except for Thokoza who will get a petition to the [provincial] legislature. Appeals to government bureaucracies do not feature. Several of the groups jump from the councilor to the president. But they are not quite sure how to get hold of the president. Others take a passive approach, simply noting that the council will come and check or that the Public Protector's people will come and see. Some also mention the necessity of working through the offices of the governing party in order to have a good chance to get action. Richards Bay differs, noting that '(n)ow the ANC is just there, not connected with the community like they were in the days of Mandela; you are even scared to go to them with your problems'. The general reliance on the local councilor accompanies the very poor ratings of both 'the local councilor' and the president of the country. Protest supplements these meagre alternative repertoires for representation.

#### 4.4 Sympathy for protest and strike action

'Cause chaos and get representation', argues one of the participants. Protest action for better service delivery – on government services generally – gets widespread support. It comes mainly from black-African participants with experiences of service backlogs, but occurs even in minority group ranks. While their emphatic position is that they themselves will not protest, they stress that they understand why others do. In many other groups and especially amongst black-African citizens, support for or participation in protest is seen as preferable to voting for an opposition party.

Community members largely report that protest has worked for them – perhaps not in terms of ensuring tangible government action, but at least to get the attention of the otherwise-hidden public representatives. They stress that 'people protest when they are taken for granted'. Despite taking pride in having stood up for their rights and protested, the Makana group bemoans the fact that still 'nothing ever happens'.

Racial minority groups tend to caution against side-effects and hidden agendas in protest action. The Cape Town-MM group says: 'Protest, yes, but in a clean way.... People use it as a means to commit crime.' The Bloemfontein group concurs that '[protestors] ruin other people's businesses, they destroy everything and they steal'. Participants stress the need for the protests to be peaceful. 'Without violence, then it would be nice', argues the Dispatch group.

#### **Protest is an effective voice**

*'That is the way of shaking them.' 'It is a fast win.' (Diepsloot)*

*'If you write a letter to the councilor you will never get a reply. They won't do anything about it. So the only way is to go out and cause chaos.' (Richards Bay)*

*'For us to even get toilets we protested and it helped.' (Whittlesea)*

*'[After protests] Jacob Zuma was in Snake Park promising them things.'*

*'People from Motswaledi protested, they even burnt the KFC ... then the councilors came and people from government came.' (Thokoza)*

*'When you stand up as the community, that is when [elected representatives] become true to you.' (Hammanskraal)*

#### **We have done protests!**

*'The people from Gini have woken up. Before, when they didn't like something, they would keep quiet. Now they get up and hold protests.' (Makana)*

*'I protest a lot.' (Whittlesea)*

*'I have taken part in Cosatu protest marches.' (Cape Town-MM)*

Some are critical of protest. They reckon it does not work, that there are other alternatives, that you could get killed, or that it takes up too much of meagre resources. The Marikana killing of striking miners serves as motivation not to protest. The Richards Bay group points out: 'But you can never trust a protest now, seeing what happened in Marikana with police shooting at protesters, killing them.' The Hammanskraal group argues that if dissatisfied people just handle the situation 'correctly, there will not be a need for protest'. The Thokoza group relates that they are either too lazy to protest, or that transport to get to a protest will eat into their modest resources.

The Executive group warns about the danger that the protests could one day come together to constitute a more general uprising. A participant observes: 'Every day I wake up and wonder when the bomb that is ticking is going to blow. Every time I hear of a service delivery protest in Zamdela, I think, why haven't the people from [other communities] gone nuts as well? And when they do that together, we know what will happen. That is for me one thing that keeps me awake at night.'

## **4.5 The mass media, political awareness and amplification of people's voices**

The mass media are widely and across all of South Africa's racial designations credited for playing a valuable role in keeping citizens informed. In particular, the media have helped create awareness of



government and leadership processes beyond local horizons. Consequently, South African citizens are highly informed of public issues and political events, as reflected in the group discussions.

### ***The media creating national citizens***

Many of the South Africans in these groups live in villages, are from lower LSM categories and infrequently move beyond their areas of residence, but they think of themselves as *national* citizens. The participants in this study are widely exposed to especially the electronic media – radio and television. They appreciate both, but single out television (both the South African Broadcasting Corporation and private free-to-air channel ETV) as providing the ‘evidence’ in the form of visual material. They appreciate programs like ‘Third Degree’. They also prize newspapers including, in the case of urbanites, the free local newspapers. Social media receive several mentions as useful and effective, engaging participants directly.

The information helps them to be both positive and critical of government and the political parties. They see what government is delivering, and where it is lapsing, beyond their own communities. They see the ANC telling its story; they ‘directly’ observe opposition parties parading their best. Nevertheless, they do not just take media content at face value (Table 7). They have reasonably varied exposure, supplemented by word-of-mouth, and regard themselves as perfectly able to make up their own minds.

The Thokoza women astutely observe the power of political entertainment on television. They note that the movie selection on Mzansi Magic (a South African-content private, satellite television channel) ‘is only showing political stuff’ and this makes them think of voting. The media can influence how people remember the past: it reminds them of the suffering of black people in South Africa to attain freedom. They remark: ‘And then you see the Steve Biko one and you think, “The black man has suffered enough.”’ Khayelitsha notices that the screening on television of the movie Sarafina brings back memories of the 1980s struggle and police shooting the people.

### **Empowerment through information and knowledge**

*‘We don’t know anything; we only see things on TV.... Though we live in a village, we can be informed.’ ‘We want to see both the bad and the good news about government.’ (Whittlesea)*

*‘The media’s role is to expose the scandals that we would not otherwise know of. The media do not care who you are or what color you are, they expose them all.’ (Hammanskraal)*

*‘People before did not have knowledge regarding the government, now there is a campaign called Right to Know and it represents communities regarding their rights.’ (Makana)*

### **Government criticism of media means there is something to hide**

*‘Government says the media has too much power, because they have something to hide.’ ‘Absolutely ... corruption!’ (Thokoza)*

*‘The reason why government doesn’t like the media is because they [those in government] have something to hide. It is as simple as that.’ (Cape Town-MM)*

### ***The media as extension of people's voice***

The citizens in these groups often see the mass media as an extension of their own voice, of their eyes and ears, especially if they are from segments of society still advocating for more delivery and more transformation. The media help them to make their voices heard. The media are also seen to be concerned about the same issues as those that affect these citizens. The media help them to keep their government accountable. Without media coverage and revelations they would not be informed of what their government is up to (Table 7). The Makana group also mentioned their use of community radio to get the attention of authorities.

**Table 6:**  
**The media and perceptions of the good and the bad – selection of groups**

	<b>POSITIVES</b>	<b>NEGATIVES</b>
<b>Sannieshof</b>	'It is important for us to know what is going on within our government.'	'They show things that under-age children should not be seeing.'
<b>Heidedal</b>	'They make us see the things we are supposed to see.'	'They don't report things that build the country.'
<b>Whittlesea</b>	'Even though we live in a village we are informed.' 'Government [now] is close to us.'	-
<b>Bloemfontein</b>	'It is media that make our world go around.'	'A lot of misperception is coming from the media, telling us government is so great....'
<b>Jozini</b>	'Forcing [the media] into silence wouldn't go with the Bill of Rights.'	-
<b>Barberton</b>	'TV has been doing a good job telling us about the Vavi saga.'	'They should be courteous, and not humiliate people like the president....'
<b>Richards Bay</b>	'Government has no right to tell the media what to say.... They [media] should tell us the truth.'	'They have too much freedom, especially when it comes to talking about people's private lives....'
<b>Thokoza</b>	'They bring us information we would not know about otherwise.'	'Some of the exposés are inaccurate ... and then they change their story.'
<b>Cape Town-MM</b>	'The media expose government problems.'	'Newspapers are already censored, or they leave stuff out themselves. It is wrong....'
<b>Pilot</b>	'The media is our voice.'	
<b>Khayelitsha</b>	'When they start telling the truth new rules are brought in to stop them.'	'Not that I am a fan of [a high-profile person] but his love life is just too much.'
	'Media are being used by the ANC.... Movies like Sarafina will be aired; they will say vote for the ANC because black people used to be shot at.'	'It is in the media where other political parties are promoted and the ruling party is bashed.'
<b>Durban</b>	'Carte Blanche is good.' The president wants to 'take the glory but none of the bad stuff.'	'Some or most of them are biased, soaking up material from government.'
<b>Emalahleni</b>	'You can use the media if you want government to do something for you.' 'Government is already controlling the media.'	'The press always focuses on the bad, and never on the good.' 'They focus mainly on the bad, like in the ANC.'
<b>Garies</b>	'We need to get all the information so that we can form our own opinions.' 'That's why I appreciated "Third Degree" so much.'	'They look for sensation.'
<b>Diepsloot</b>	'We need the media to expose secret agendas of some of the top guns.'	'The media are not giving enough attention to the good work we do in the community.'
<b>Executive</b>	'I use social media and engage on the facts.'	'They cross the line too often, and apologize on page 15.'
	'Social media have power.'	

Table 6 demonstrates the love-hate but very appreciative relationship that citizens have with the mass media. It shows that the media are an important cog in the wheel of South African democracy, and how they effectively step in where government structures are considered unsuccessful or unaccountable.

## Section 5: Voting and party political choice

- 5.1 Introduction and synopsis of main findings
- 5.2 Commitment to vote, albeit not the time of euphoria anymore
- 5.3 Why many South Africans may *not* vote come Election 2014
- 5.4 Election campaigns and the cynical South African voter
- 5.5 The political parties and Election 2014

### 5.1 Introduction and synopsis of main findings

This study testifies to South African citizens' wide-ranging and continuous love affair with elections. Whether their party wins or loses, whether they form part of the majority or a small minority, nearly everyone relishes participation. If they support minority parties, voting will earn them the right to criticize. If they align with the majority party and don't vote, then they may have ceded a victory to a party that reminds them of things that are worse than the worst of the misdemeanors of their own party. On the other hand, there is often despondency about elections, and intense cynicism about the sincerity of the campaigning big shots that make their ritualistic pre-election appearances in communities. Many do wonder whether voting makes a difference, or they have concluded that it does not. Nonetheless, the study indicates that South Africans overwhelmingly remain enthusiastic about ballot politics.

The main findings explored in this section are:

- South African citizens continue rallying for electoral participation. Casting a ballot does not nearly compare with 1994, but they overwhelmingly anticipate voting in 2014. Whether their party is likely to win or lose, they largely see the need to participate.
- The most common reasons for voting are hope for further change, earning the right to criticize, voting for a job and defending the victory over apartheid.
- Citizens who do not intend to vote cite disappointment that so little has changed despite previous votes. They are angry at their leaders, the lack of representation and politicians' self-serving behaviors.
- South African voters are cynics when it comes to election candidates and party campaigns. They expect empty promises, hollow words, repetitions of stale undertakings and, again, disappearing acts by the newly elected.
- ANC popular support persists, but it is different and more fragile than it once was. There is no more 'blind loyalty' in the sense of not seeing the faults of the ANC. The ANC will be rewarded for delivering, for its ongoing albeit faded status as liberation icon, because voters will do it for Mandela, and because corruption is largely not blamed on the ANC as an

organization. Discontent simmers, even if by and large it does not spill over into the vote itself.

- The DA mostly finds support amongst minority groups. Pro-ANC participants give the DA some credit, but draw the line at voting for them. They welcome the emergence of black-African leaders in the DA, but the DA still reminds them of white dominance under apartheid.
- Agang SA is a largely unknown newcomer to party politics. Those who know about Agang often think about it as just another opposition party, greedy for support.
- Citizens admire the EFF for speaking truth to power and hopefully contributing to expose and end government corruption. However, they do not take the party and its policies entirely seriously.

## 5.2 Commitment to vote, albeit not the time of euphoria anymore

As a general rule, South Africans continue to love voting. The commitment persists, even if by now it is largely without the passion of 1994 and not comparable to voting in that first election. Along different dimensions, the three most commonly cited reasons for voting (irrespective of party support and across majority and minority racial groupings) are hope for change, the right to complain or criticize and, on a specific level, to vote for jobs. Omnipresent, however, and even if sometimes not explicitly articulated is the continuous compulsion to protect the post-apartheid system against anything that might even vaguely look threatening. South Africans' appreciation for the realized rights to humanity and dignity to this day directly impacts the decision both to keep voting and to make particular party choices.

Commitment to vote in 2013 nevertheless shows the wear and tear that comes with 20 years of imperfect democracy. Citizens are more cynical; they have hope but they expect less or only longer-term fulfilment. They will vote, or vote for a particular party, but do not do so blindly. They see the weaknesses of voting for certain parties, but they are tolerant, for now, and even rationalize their choices. The study showed little difference between the motivations and arguments of youth and older participants.

### **From euphoria to 'they are living off us' and 'what will it do for me?'**

*'We were euphoric at the time. We were being promised heaven and earth, but now we no longer believe everything we are told.' 'You sometimes ask yourself, what does voting in an election actually do for me?'* (Jozini)

*'When you vote you can have your say about what is wrong.'* (Khayelitsha)

*'Without us there is no government, we who are voting are actually the government. [Those who are elected] are living off us; they are making us not to trust the government.'* (Richards Bay)

*'In 1994 it was very serious [about freedom], but now it is about reputation, money, and false promises that they make to get our votes.'* (Makana)

A Khayelitsha conversation reveals the new culture of voting – little excitement and low expectations that it will result in active and caring representation:

*'When it's time to vote I don't feel anything, because there is no difference. I just do it*

*for the sake of voting.’ ‘You vote for the sake of voting now; even when the president makes his speeches it doesn’t affect me anymore, not at all.’ ‘It is not a time of happiness. People go through so much trouble to vote. But after the vote there is so little to reap.’ ‘When it is time to vote I feel angry and frustrated, because I feel I am making those in parliament richer while I don’t get anything from this.’*

The young participants in Richards Bay, who had not voted in 1994, were clear about the differences between voting in 1994 and thereafter:

*‘In 1994 people knew what they were voting for, and they knew what was going to happen after that. But since 1994 we only see a few minor details changing after elections – some people going up and some down.’ ‘In 1994 it was a ticket to freedom. Freedom is here now, and government relaxed.’ ‘People nowadays vote for who you are, so we are voting for this political party because it is ruling and we know this guy....’*

### **Voting improves job prospects**

Participants, for example in Richards Bay, argue that a voting stamp on your ID book is one of the hurdles to pass in order to get a job. The Makana and Thokoza groups concur; some will vote in the hope that they will impress the right people and score a job.

#### **Vote, impress, get a job**

*‘And if you get to the councilor’s office and you don’t have that voting stamp on your ID, then you won’t get help.’ (Richards Bay)*

*‘They check, if you didn’t vote you will not get a job.’ ‘That’s the rumor doing the round.’ (Thokoza)*  
*‘It will be my first time voting and I need a job.’ (Diepsloot)*

### **Citizen duty and earning the right to criticize**

Citizen duty features when it comes to the choice between voting or not. Many, especially from racial minority groups, say they will vote to show their commitment to democracy and elections, even if their party will not win. A spontaneous sentiment across many of these groups is: ‘Without voting you have no right to complain.’ Citizens also consider the political party implications of abstention. Should you support an opposition party but decide not to vote, abstention would mean a de facto vote for the ANC, and vice versa.

#### **Citizen duty and license to criticize**

*‘I voted in 2009 not because I expected change; I voted because I am a South African.’ (Sannieshof)*  
*‘I vote because it is my duty; not because I want to.’ (Richards Bay)*  
*‘If I don’t vote I don’t have the right to complain afterwards.’ (Garies)*

#### **Abstention equals a vote for the ‘other party’**

*‘If you don’t vote your vote actually goes in favor of the ANC.’ (Dysselsdorp)*  
*‘Maybe your vote is all that is missing.’ (Thokoza)*  
*‘If you do not vote that vote goes to the majority party.’ (Pietermaritzburg)*

### **Defending liberation**

For many of these citizens, particularly from black-African backgrounds, party and liberation specifics are closely linked to motivation to vote. The significant change that followed the 1994 vote is seen as reason to keep voting. In the current context voting is linked to hope and continuing the movement away from apartheid; it follows that the argument has implications for specific party choices.

#### **History shows that voting matters**

*'If we didn't go vote in 1994, we wouldn't be sitting here now, having this discussion with you ... we would be walking around carrying those dompases and we wouldn't be home owners.'* (Khayelitsha)

*'The more you vote, the more ideas are formed. If we reverse, we are not going anywhere.'* (Sannieshof)

#### **Vote to stop a reversal to apartheid**

*'If a person doesn't vote he would have killed [the ANC] ... making an 'X' means that at least we would not have given white people a chance.'* (Heidedal)

*'The only reason I am voting nowadays is because I don't want the DA to win elections.'* (Barberton)

*'I am going to vote out of fear of being ruled by white people again; they treated us badly.'* (Makana)

### **Hope for more delivery**

Citizens largely persist in their hope that the governing party (different ones in different places, but largely the ANC) will deliver more, and to this effect they will continue voting. They defend the ANC, emphasizing that the ANC has brought change; it is just that it is not enough yet. Participants talk about threatening to withhold their vote, and bargain for better delivery. Other participants signal that they tire of waiting for further change. Some angry participants argue that the rise of new political parties signals that people are not all lining up to praise-sing the ANC. 'There are political parties starting everywhere, which shows people want something else', says the Makana group.

#### **Hope for delivery, for parties to 'sober up'**

*'It's going to make a difference, eventually, it will.'* (Cape Town-MM)

*'I vote because in my heart I hope that one day government will sober up and see the difference between those who are rich and those who are poor.'* (Khayelitsha)

*'Voting brings about development in the community where you live.'* (Jozini)

*'People might say those things [like voting for another party] but when it is election time they vote according to their personal needs, like houses and tarred roads.'* (Makana)

## **5.3 Why many South Africans may not vote come Election 2014**

Citizens' motivation not to vote is often related to despondency about things that have not happened for or around them in the first two decades of democracy. This sentiment prevails across racial designations. It relates to these South Africans' disappointment about absentee representation and disillusionment due to the observed greed and self-serving, 'own-pocket' actions of the political elite. Resentment of corruption features strongly as well.

### **No obvious results, no better representation, no vote**

*'Why must I vote? I do not benefit from my vote, but rather the person that I voted for.'* (Sannieshof)

*'You vote for a person and uplift them and when they get [into the legislatures] they don't represent the community.'* (Whittlesea)

*'When we voted there was nothing that we gained from it.'* (Khayelitsha)

*'The fact that the ANC has become corrupt is not a reason not to vote; it is just a reason to vote for another party.'* (Pretoria)

### **We won't be rewarded for voting**

*'Government is not going to give you something because you voted.*

*We're all getting the same thing.'* (Dysselsdorp)

*'Why I don't vote ... it is like praying when you are hungry; you will never have flour dropping from the sky, unless you are working.'* (Modimolle)

*'In a lot of cases men are more likely not to vote, because we don't get as much of the rights as women do, some of us cannot even get jobs....'* (Modimolle)

### **'Hollow words' make voters feel it is futile to vote**

These participants have a strong distrust of politicians and the undertakings they give, both in election campaigns and when they are in government. The cynicism covers all political parties and comes from both the racial majority and minorities. Citizens hear the same promises repeatedly, without seeing the results, and ask themselves why things would be different this time around.

### **Empty promises in election campaigns**

*'People don't see that they fool us when they say, "come, let's vote ANC."'* (Richards Bay)

*'The government says it listens, but its actions do not show it.'* (Makana)

*'Some people have been living in a shack for 15 years and have voted five times, but still nothing is happening.'* (Richards Bay)

*"They usually promise us that if we vote for them they are going to create jobs...."*

*'You hear rumors that thousands of billions are going to be allocated for job creation and it never happens.'* (Thokoza)

*'When they have been voted for their language changes; then they empower their friends.'* (Diepsloot)

*'After the votes the promises are all gone.'* (Pilot)

*'The promises are not kept. So there is no need to vote.'* *'All the political parties talk as if they are the best and do the most. But they don't [do the most]. So it's useless to vote....'* (Garies)

*'Every party is just promises, promises, promises.'* (Pietermaritzburg)

*'Everybody is going to think if the DA gets in tomorrow there will be no crime, everybody will have a job, a house and water. It is not true. So after a month everyone will think, "I wasted my vote."'* (Pilot)



*'As soon as they are elected it's cut-off, totally.'* (Bloemfontein)

*'We've heard these promises for years, but have seen nothing materializing.'* (Dysselsdorp)

## 5.4 Election campaigns and the cynical South African voter

By all indications available in this study, South African voters have become hardened cynics. They wonder about politicians and their campaigns for votes. They argue that election time is when you see party representatives who become your elected representatives; this is the time when they make (false) promises; they always promise the same kind of things and these hardly ever come true. Elections are the time when politicians pretend to be working against corruption.

Participants nevertheless welcome the election campaigns, even if simply because they reckon this will be the only time in the next five years, until the next campaign, that the representatives will be seen in the community. The communities are also aware that the hand-outs by politicians – seen to be rife on the eve of elections – often come from the taxpayer's pocket, their own pockets. They will take the gifts and won't feel obligated to the party that is handing them out. Cynical South African voters also welcome governing parties' sudden pre-election activities: it could mean a quick spate of delivery.

### Pre-election time is delivery season

*'When elections come they start doing things in order to win votes.'* (Thokoza)

*'When we want to pass on our grievances to government they are nowhere to be seen, but when it is time to vote they come running to us and start looking busy.'* (Whittlesea)

*'You will see six months before the election; they will be all over ... and once they receive your vote, they are done with you.'* (Sannieshof)

*'They are going to pave the rural areas from left to right, and then leave it again for the next four years.'* (Dispatch)

### Campaign time – expect delivery of groceries, even shoes

*'You see six months before elections they bring you groceries, they bring themselves closer to the people, they will build 50 RDP houses, because you will vote.'* (Diepsloot)

*'Because they want us to vote, they are going to start saying, "free groceries", free whatever ..., and the grannies are all going to vote.'* (Thokoza)

*'The government starts working, making sure that everything is being implemented when elections draw closer, but after elections nothing is being done at all.'* (Khayelitsha)

*'The DA was there giving them hampers and little flags and all that. I asked my mom: "You lived through the torture and you know what these people can do and now you are taking this...." She said: "The fact that we are there taking hampers doesn't mean anything."'* (Executive)

*'We are approaching election dates and suddenly we see politicians coming in and handing out shoes for school children.'* (Theunissen)

## 5.5 The political parties and Election 2014

The voices in this study show the fragility within continuous dominance of the ANC. They demonstrate the complexities and rationality of ongoing ANC support. Participants also reveal strong minority group support for the DA. Black-Africans occasionally toy with DA support, wondering if they should experiment with an opposition vote, but then retreat back into the ANC. These two parties and newcomer the EFF were central figures in the party support debates in the groups. Others, including Agang SA, hardly feature.

### ***The African National Congress (ANC) and complexities of support-with-resentment***

Whereas ANC popular support continues it has become a qualitatively different form of support. By all indications from this study the days of blind loyalty are past. ANC supporters are aware of the flaws in the party they love. Many give far-reaching credit for what the ANC achieved and the party retains its association with the defeat of apartheid. It has nevertheless become a very different party, compared with the 1994 edition. The many layers of criticism (these emerge in Sections 2–4) do not preclude continuous ANC support. ANC supporters expect more, and reckon the ANC remains the best party to bring further delivery and transformation, even if they see elite self-interest, nepotism and corruption. The most evident current opposition party in their eyes (the DA) retains too much racial baggage, citizens are generally unconvinced that another party would not fall into the traps of power, and voting ANC is part of culture and identity for most black-African South Africans. Hence, the current-day ANC is largely accepted, warts and all, for now.

The two bottom lines of current-day ANC support as it emerges from this project are that (a) there is strong discontent-within-loyalty to the ANC, and (b) the open recognition of the multiple flaws of the ANC and ANC-as-government does not trigger far-reaching support for (or switches to) opposition parties. ANC-supportive participants do not see a workable political party alternative. Trust in the ANC has become more tentative; the participants often do not really sound convinced that the leaders this time around will deliver what they promise, especially jobs. However, the lingering trust is strong enough to enable participants to continue hoping that there will be change for the better, with the ANC at the helm.

The rest of this section takes stock of the motivations that participants offer on why they will support the ANC in 2014. It then explores reasons for not or no longer supporting the ANC. Criticisms of the ANC, as illustrated in much of the rest of the section, do not mean that voters have abandoned the party, or will abstain or switch votes in the next election. In the words of a man from Modimolle, 'I am talking, but I am going to vote for them'.

### ***The main reasons for voting ANC***

The research suggests that the hitherto pro-ANC voters are not approaching the point of abandoning the ANC, at least not on a large scale. The main reasons why participants will continue voting for the ANC in Election 2014 are its continuous status as symbol of liberation from apartheid, rewarding the ANC for transformation and delivery since 1994, supporting the ANC because it is an ingrained culture and there is a deep-seated connection between party and people, because the ANC as party is not really responsible for corruption, for the legacy of Mandela (Table 8), and because they find themselves unable to identify with available party alternatives.

### **A: ANC, the liberation icon**

Explicit references to the ANC as liberation icon nowadays are few and far between. Yet, the history weighs heavily and South Africans 'know how it all started in 1994' (words from Heidedal). A Garies voice notes that 'I shall vote ANC because I had the opportunity to grow up in a free country, because of their liberation movement'. Many participants from racial majority and minority groups nowadays argue that liberation credentials alone are not or are no longer enough to justify voting for the ANC. The socio-economic change that happened in the last 20 years, guided by the ANC, for most participants across demographic differences supplements the ANC's liberation credentials. Even if the socio-economic change is not perfect, it is substantial. Other participants stress that they cannot live on liberation if they do not have jobs. Some youth share these sentiments; others say that perhaps they will move away from the ANC once their parents and grandparents are no longer there to remind them of the suffering under apartheid.

#### **We don't care about history, what are they doing now?**

*'Sure [the ANC] liberated South Africa, but what are they doing now to develop communities?.'*

*'All we want is development in our communities.'* (Jozini)

*'We want jobs, we really don't care about history.'* (Khayelitsha)

*'They want us to hang onto that part of history, and help them stay in power because of liberation.'*

*But it is more about what is happening now and about our daily experiences.'* (Dysselsdorp)

*'I think people are no longer voting for freedom. Years ago they voted for the party that gave them freedom, the ANC. Now you have to vote for service delivery.'* (Pretoria)

*'Black people have the "mentality" that it is the ANC that took us out of apartheid. So it will be difficult to move from the ANC to a party where there is a white leader, because black people have the fear of going back to apartheid.'* *'The youth does not care about all those fights for our freedom, they care about what is happening now ... they want to see improvement now.'* (Richards Bay)

There was little consensus on whether the youth would be motivated to vote in 2014 and, if they are motivated, support the ANC. The study shows that 'the youth' is not a coherent and consensual bloc of new or recently-new voters. Their opinions vary widely, similar to those of the participants from other age categories. Focus group conversations amongst the youth (and particularly the black-African youth) rarely raised the liberation struggle and a need to reward the ANC for the freedom gained. Some in the youth groups stressed that *they* will still support the ANC, but they are not sure about those who come after them. Participants of other age groups also had strong opinions on what the youth might or might not do.

#### **Youth and ANC support**

*'The youth can change things; there are a lot of us.'* (Sannieshof)

*'Youths won't vote in great numbers in 2014. They see no hope for the future.'* (Garies)

*'Young people do not care about what the ANC did in the past. They just want to know what it is doing for them now.'* (Jozini)

*'Because the born-frees were born into one political party, they are going to vote for something else.' 'The young people who do not really understand politics, and the elderly, they will vote for the ANC.'* (Thokoza)

*'The ANC still sticks with some people, especially the elderly.'* (Khayelitsha)

### **The youth care about now**

*'The youth will vote based on what the ruling party is doing now compared to the elders who will be voting based on how the whites oppressed them. There is Rama and Blossom, even though both are butter, it is said Rama is the original, so the elders will vote for Rama [the ANC].'* (Sannieshof)

*'The youth today aren't interested in what the Mandelas and Bikos did for the country. They are looking at what Zuma and the Malemas are doing to push BEE ....'* (Durban)

*'Our generation understands the liberation, but there is another generation coming and they won't be singing that song.'* (Diepsloot)

*'You get a black kid in the suburbs who can't utter a single word of Zulu – that kid does not have an attachment to the true struggle.'* (Executive)

**Table 7:**

#### **Reasons to vote or continue to vote ANC in 2014**

<b>Liberation icon</b>	<p><b>People died for the vote</b></p> <p>'They vote with their hearts, because they know how many people died for that vote. They vote with their soul, knowing we may not change things tomorrow, but you know what, we are making a choice.' (Executive) 'We shall only vote for another party one day when our parents and grandparents are not there to remind us of the past that we have had in this country.' (Johannesburg) 'The promises are never going to be met. But it is because of the past and the family, and those things, that we have to vote.' (Durban)</p> <p><b>The ANC's closeness to African people</b></p> <p>'The ANC are the only ones that can stand for Africans, without the ANC we cannot go anywhere.' (Heidedal) 'The ANC is the only one of the political parties that the people understand.' (Khayelitsha)</p>
<b>It is our culture; we trust, we fix</b>	<p><b>Trust and hope</b></p> <p>'Without voting [for the ANC] there will be no further change.' (Sannieshof) 'When I voted in 2009, I thought the next five years were going to be better.' 'I voted for the ANC because my family needed a new house.' 'I voted because I believed the ANC would bring us a better life, better opportunities.' 'We voted for the party in the hope of change.' (Modimolle) 'We wait and trust that things will get better. Give them a chance, in the hope of eradicating corruption.' 'I hope that God will lead us to a better way, so I give them one more chance to end corruption.' (Modimolle)</p> <p><b>We fix what we have</b></p> <p>'Let's say that you have a car and that car was in an accident.... You need to fix that car, not buy a new car. That is just a waste of money.' (Emalahleni) 'I think it is better to fix what we have, rather than move to another party. The rest of the parties will also need time and money like the ANC has.... So let us fix the ANC and work with what we have.' 'I can tolerate the bad things that my organization does. I can see they want to fix their mistakes, so I will always vote for them....' (Diepsloot)</p> <p><b>We are heavily invested in the ANC</b></p> <p>'I wait and trust that things will get better. I have put too much energy and effort into my party to go and start afresh. For me, I think I will suffer more [if I now take a new party].' 'I shall not change parties. What we have started is for a good cause, only certain people are offending the cause.' (Modimolle) 'We will vote for the ANC because it is the party that will win.' (Richards Bay)</p>

	<p><b>The parent does not throw the child out</b></p> <p>‘No matter how out of control your child is, you are not going to throw him or her out. It’s the same with the ANC government. We are unhappy with them in some ways, but we are still going to vote for them.’ (Barberton) ‘The ANC is infested with corruption, we are aware that it is corrupt ... this does not mean we do not love it.’ (Zeerust)</p> <p><b>Better the devil you know</b></p> <p>‘If another party comes into power, it would meet its own needs before the people’s needs. The ANC has been meeting its needs all this time, and now it is the time for the people. So, better the devil you know....’ (Barberton) ‘As the old adage goes, better the devil you know. We know the ANC is corrupt, so let’s just stick to it rather than voting for someone else.’ (Thokoza)</p>
	<p><b>Reward the ANC for delivery</b></p> <p><b>Evidence of change and delivery</b></p> <p>‘I live the process of ANC delivery; I have seen the changes they brought, like they gave money to the pensioners.’ (Sannieshof), ‘I think they are doing just enough for them to get the next vote.’ ‘There is a lot that they have done. It is a short period that they have been ruling, like from 1994, that is short.’ (Emalahleni) ‘I will continue voting because I have proof that the ANC has done well.... we leave our parents in the rural areas for five months before we go and see them again, and with the little grant money they are able to survive.’ ‘Our children have the right to free education, so I say the ANC has done well, so let’s continue voting for them.’ (Modimolle)</p>
	<p><b>Displacing blame for ANC / ANC government faults and problems – justifying ongoing support</b></p> <p><b>Displacing liability away from ‘government’ or ‘top government’</b></p> <p>‘The government does try hard to meet the people’s needs, but the people they employ [in the civil service] fail us.’ ‘They government is not to blame.... where things do not work well, rather it is the people whom government is trusting to implement the policies [that are at fault].’ Government is failing to meet our needs because there is not enough money.’ (Jozini) ‘Our government is fine at the top, the problems start at the bottom, where they have to do delivery.’ (Heidedal) ‘It is only those in local government that are corrupt and selfish, that is what is ruining the name of the ANC.’ (Hammanskraal) ‘The people at the municipal offices take bribes and then we say it is the government.’ (Makana)</p> <p><b>Displacing liability away from the ANC</b></p> <p>‘The ANC itself is not a problem; it is the people serving it ... at the top.’ ‘It is individuals of that party that are the ones dragging the party’s name through the mud; they are responsible for all that bad that is happening, they ruin everything.’ (Emalahleni) ‘The ANC is fine but there are things it needs to fix – job opportunities, tenders, corruption, money disappearing.... They don’t get to do what they are supposed to do.’ (Barberton) ‘The ANC is not bad, man, it is the rulers, its leaders.’ (Dispatch) ‘It is these public officials that are not doing their jobs to bring better service delivery.’ (Emalahleni)</p> <p><b>Displacing blame away from the top ANC</b></p> <p>‘The problem is with the lower end, not the high end, of government.’ (Zeerust) ‘The people reporting directly to Zuma are obviously not being open and honest enough with him.’ (Pietermaritzburg) ‘He tries his best to act as a leader, and do his duties; it is the people that work for him that are a problem.’ (Emalahleni)</p> <p><b>Displacing blame away from the party to the members, individuals</b></p> <p>‘The members of the party get side-tracked and they don’t focus on the goals and mission of the party, but on their own greed and self-empowerment.’ (Emalahleni) ‘It is not the ANC that has stopped walking side-by-side with the people, it is individuals.’ (Diepsloot)</p>
	<p><b>For Mandela</b></p> <p><b>We vote so that his name does not die</b></p> <p>‘The reason that we vote is so that his name does not die.’ (Khayelitsha) ‘When we started voting for the ANC it was because we thought we could benefit from the party, it was because Mandela was released from prison.... So we are going to vote for the ANC.’ (Modimolle)</p> <p><b>The ANC has our vote because of Mandela</b></p> <p>‘It is because of the old man that they will continue voting for the ANC. Because of him they [the ANC] will have our loyalty for a long time to come.’ (Hammanskraal) ‘We vote</p>

for “Tata” [Mandela], but these other people have spoilt the excitement.’ (Zeerust) ‘As long as the old man is still around I shall carry on voting, I am not sure thereafter.’ ‘I will still cast my vote, even if things will be in a mess.’ (Theunissen)

#### **B: ‘It is our culture’ and ‘we fix what we have’**

Two telling statements on why voters – cynical and fully aware of the ANC’s shortcomings – continue allegiance to the ANC come from Diepsloot: ‘It is our culture to vote for the ANC’, and ‘voting for the ANC is a journey ... people are positive that they will see change’ (see Table 8). Some of the responses on trust and ‘fixing what you have’ go further, emphasizing that the people’s demonstrated trust in the ANC cannot be taken for granted. Another Diepsloot voice stresses that ‘they [the ANC] will know that even if they mess up and people still choose them they still need to make that difference’.

#### **C: Reward the ANC for change that happened, continue voting for change**

Many South Africans will probably vote for the ANC with the knowledge that the party has been performing and delivering, and has effected major changes in their lives. They feel the ANC needs to be rewarded – much has changed since the party took power (see Table 8). The participants nevertheless know about the tangible shortcomings in delivery itself. Unemployment is a major thorn in their flesh. They resent that the current-day leaders do not live up to clean government and that they abuse the people’s trust. These citizens see many of those elected into government (and their colleagues or associates) as greedy power-mongers who pursue the benefit of the people only after they have taken care of themselves. Yet, people have not given up hope, neither for a better ANC nor for further and better delivery. The fact that they do not see tangible hope in any existing opposition party, and do not believe that an opposition party would do dramatically better, aids continued loyalty to the ANC.

#### **D: Displacing blame away from the ANC and voting for the new ANC**

The ANC remains overwhelmingly positively referred to when it comes to voting choice, even amongst those participants that are wildly critical of the leadership. ANC-supportive participants look for reasons *not to blame* the ANC, and to continue voting ANC. They displace blame to others, away from the ANC as party. Instead of imputing the ANC, it becomes government, the leaders, implementers in the civil service, or the ones in local government (Table 8). Sometimes the top leaders themselves are seen to be devoid of blame; instead, it is those entrusted by the ANC and government leaders to do the implementation that should bear the blame. At other times it is the local politicians and local government that have betrayed the top leadership. Generally, provincial party and provincial government leaders escape the blame, unless they are in the North West and the Free State (two provinces that are known for ANC factionalism). In another variation some also insist that their ANC vote will be for ‘Tata’ Mandela, not for the present-day ANC leadership. The displacement of blame thus leaves space for the ANC itself to be minimally liable and retain electoral support.

The majority sentiment, in the words of a Zeerust woman, is, ‘The ANC is infested with corruption, we are aware of this ... it does not mean we do not love it’. Few participants do not see disconcerting levels of corruption in the ANC, but they see the electoral implications differently. Another sentiment – that corruption *will* impact – comes in the words of a fellow Zeerust woman: ‘Too much corruption is taking place. So, fewer people will vote for the ANC’. Thus, there will be fewer votes

but no mass exodus due to corruption ... although the people are getting 'irritated', a phrase from the Diepsloot discussion.

Participants have no doubt that the ANC of 2013 vastly differs from the 1994 model. Corruption is a big part of the story, but Marikana also stands out as a beacon of the new identity. Participants wish that the ANC could sort its problems of corruption, in-fighting and lapses in legitimacy. This was illustrated in the fact that the ANC could not 'go to Marikana to mourn with the people' (Modimolle group, about the 2013 one-year commemoration of Marikana). Some groups refer to ANC factions affecting local politics. 'If only they can sort out their differences as a party, otherwise they have done a lot of things for us', remarked a Modimolle participant. The Hammanskraal group noted that a factional in-group marginalizes 'ordinary' opinions in meetings. The in-fighting sows confusion; community members do not know whom to trust.

#### **The ANC 'is not the same as it was before'**

*'The ANC is no longer genuine now, it is full of corruption.'* (Pilot)

*'[People] need to understand now that the ANC is not the same as it was before.'* (Khayelitsha)

*'It is different then and now. Then you were able to see what you were voting for' 'In 1994 they knew they were voting for Mandela, a real leader. It is different now....'* (Diepsloot)

#### **'The bag of potatoes needs to be shaken'**

*'This [ANC factionalist in-fighting] brings us down because we do not know whom we are dealing or fighting with. These people are supposed to be on our side and now they are bringing each other down. Now we don't know whom to trust.'* (Richards Bay)

*'We did not vote in 2009 because things had happened within our leadership. Our leader is Mr. "X" now; we had our eye on someone else to occupy that seat....'* (Heidedal)

*'There are so many power struggles in the higher ranks of the ANC. The bag of potatoes needs to be shaken so that the rotten ones can fall out and the others survive.'* (Cape Town-MM)

#### **E: 'Because of the old man Mandela'**

Participants argue that because of former president Nelson Mandela they will continue voting for the ANC. Some will do this 'for a long time to come'; others 'for as long as he lives' (Table 8). When participants ran out of reasons to justify continuous loyalty to the ANC in their intra-groups debates they often brought Mandela in as the redeeming factor. Mandela's legacy, however, does not unconditionally rub off on the current-day ANC. Many participants drew extremely unfavorable comparisons between the Mandela ANC and the current ANC. Many reckon that the ANC will suffer when Mandela goes, such as this voice from Emalahleni: 'If Nelson Mandela happens to leave the world, the ANC will lose its majority.'

#### **Reasons to vote for the Democratic Alliance (DA) ... or not to vote DA**

The DA may one day emerge as a political party with substantive and wide-ranging endorsements amongst the majority of South Africans, but this scenario is *not articulated* in the current focus group discussions. The groups delivered far-reaching evidence of the continuous predominance of the ANC (with its shortcomings, mistakes, scandals and hence vulnerabilities) over the DA (with a small but

'cleaner' record, and much evidence of 'trying'). By most indications in these groups the DA remains firmly lodged in South Africa's racial minority groups.

#### **A: The DA tries hard and governs well, but does not score the votes**

One of the ironies of opposition politics in South Africa also emerges from this study: The stronger an opposition party (for example the DA) emerges and attacks the ANC, the more South Africans (and mostly black-African citizens) appear to find it necessary to defend the ANC. In the words of a Diepsloot participant: 'The more they [the DA] are opposing the ANC the more they are lifting it.' Participants largely greet the DA's quest to break into the black-African component of the South African voter corps with skepticism. They suspect that the DA might revert to a racial past should they get into power. The more the DA tries to disinherit this racial identity, and the more they work to discredit the ANC (and ANC-inclined participants frequently share the critiques of their own party with the DA) the more citizens raise doubts about what might happen if such a party would ascend into power.

The positive DA assessments are largely from groups that included racial minority participants. There was a sprinkling of positives from groups comprising only black-African participants. In most of these cases the participants recognized good DA-as-opposition-party efforts, despite not intending to vote DA (or any other opposition party, except perhaps the EFF). ANC-supportive participants applaud black-African DA leaders for raising the same kind of issues that concern *them*, but this does not mean they will vote DA. These citizens talk about increasing numbers of black South Africans stepping into DA leadership positions. These citizens often believe that there may be less government corruption under a DA government. But they think the DA may be trying too hard. Even when participants speak of others in their communities who have joined the DA, black-African participants (such as in Hammanskraal) are adamant that these prodigal sons and daughters will still cast their votes for the ANC. They are convinced that these people have associated with the DA for reasons like jobs. They argue that the converts will be returning to the ANC again, or will vote ANC anyway, even if they wear DA t-shirts and have DA membership cards. The Modimolle group says: 'It happens a lot that people move from one party, hoping to get something from the other, and if they don't they go back to the original party'.

#### **'It can bring change'**

*'That's a party that has the potential to bring change, even if we will be under white people.'*  
*'Their promises come true, but the ANC spends so much time making empty promises.'* (Modimolle)  
*'I know there is that black lady that is coming up through the ranks pretty fast...'*  
*She will be able to reach out to the younger black person.'* (Durban)  
*'As soon as that black lady leads the DA you will see the change happening.'* *'It is a question of skin color, not of capability.'* *'It is about capability and she can do the job', 'The DA will give the ANC a go, but it will be a few years still before they get to the top.'* (Pretoria)  
*'There is hope there.'* *'It can shed that image of being white and privileged.'* (Cape Town-MM)



### **No empty promises, hope for less corruption**

*'We shall support them because we can see the direction they take.'* (Bloemfontein)

*'It is becoming a big party now, because it does not make empty promises.'* (Dispatch)

*'The DA is doing well in Cape Town.'* *'They need a chance.'* (Pilot)

*'If the DA rules there will be lots of improvements and with the DA corruption will be less.'* (Viking)

### **Memories of apartheid; 'they will take us back to the olden days'**

*'I don't trust the DA, I don't trust white people; they are like a snake waiting to bite us.'*

*'The DA tries too hard....'* (Emalahleni)

*'We as black people are scared to support white people, because we feel that apartheid is going to come back.'* *'Most people are scared of the DA....'* (Viking)

*'My grandmother was in fear that the DA would rule again and we go back to apartheid.'* (Pilot)

*'If it was up to me those black people in the DA would all leave to join the ANC.'* (Zeerust)

*'But once they win, we are not sure whether they too would change, just like the ANC did.'* (Modimolle)

*'If the DA had to come into power here, it will be 14 days and all whites will be back into their old positions and they will just do as they like.'* (Garies)

*'The DA is for white people, and people with money....'*

*The ANC is mostly for black people.'* (Theunissen)

### **B: The DA does well as an opposition party**

Several black-African groups credit the DA for doing well – they have no problem with the DA as *opposition party*. There are occasional hopes that if the DA shows serious growth the ANC would try much harder.

### **DA as pawn to get the ANC to work harder**

*'If the DA gets just one term they will make a lot of changes; I feel just one term will be more than enough.'* *'I think the ANC is threatened by the DA; they can see the DA could take their place due to their corruption and scandals.'* (Emalahleni)

*'[The DA] has to shake the ANC to do the correct things.'* (Heidedal)

*'I wish that the ANC would get 50-50 with the competitor; they would work harder.'* (Sannieshof)

### **The appeal of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)**

There is a clear duality in perceptions of the EFF. Despite the credits and beliefs that the party stands for the truth, there is also a general inability to take the EFF entirely seriously. Nevertheless, participants have no doubt that the EFF will get into parliament. Groups that had no knowledge of Agang SA were well informed about the EFF, its leadership and party regalia.

Given the EFF's origins [in essence splitting off from the ANC], citizens (and here the report speaks of those from black-African background) often see the party as 'loyal opposition' and thus as relatively

acceptable opposition. In their minds, the DA does not qualify for this status. The participants are not blind to the many wrongs in the EFF, but do not think these will be a drawback, given that corruption is commonplace in the top ANC ranks. 'Yoh! That's just trouble', says the Khayelitsha group about the EFF. The Bloemfontein and Executive groups argue that EFF leaders could destroy the ANC; they could wreak havoc when they get to parliament.

The party leadership's lack of credibility emanates from skepticism about EFF policy positions, which participants see as unrealistic, even if some emotively connect with nationalization and land repossession. The words 'joke' and 'circus' often feature in the discussions, along with the references to corruption and serious doubt as to what would come of suggestions of nationalization of mines in the hands of the former youth leaguers. A voice from the Khayelitsha group summarizes the situation: 'Yes, people will follow him, but I don't think he will be able to finish what he started'.

#### **'EFF seen as loyal opposition'**

*'The EFF is a threat for the ANC because [it] is from the ANC, knows the ANC and is still angry.'* (Khayelitsha)

*'I've heard it, they've said, "We need opposition and he is the perfect person to vote for if you are not going to vote for the ANC".'* (Durban)

*'You will be surprised how much following the EFF has on Twitter and Facebook....'* (Executive)

#### **'EFF leaders are corrupt, and so are other powerful figures'**

*'The ANC is afraid of his truths; they will try and oppress his voice.'* *'People will vote for [the EFF] because of what happened at Marikana.'* *'He is making a point by wanting to give us back the land that our forefathers left for us.'* (Modimolle)

*'If the ANC continues with corruption [the EFF] is going to destroy them.'* (Barberton)

#### **About policies – hope and cynicism**

*'Give it [the EFF] a chance, it is talking about mines.'* *'Our kids will get jobs on the mines.'* *'It says the white people have to be chased away from the farms.... What is going to happen? Black people cannot farm. Doesn't that mean we will go back to being hungry?'* *'We will go back to poverty, no doubt.'* *'Black people manage mines? Not in a million years.'* *'The main attraction is job creation in the mines, once they are nationalized.'* (Barberton)

*'Nationalization would ruin things.... Imagine if blacks were to start owning farms. I have never in my life run an orange farm, how would I know where to start? My company would go belly up.'* (Thokoza)

*'They are adopting PAC [Pan Africanist Congress] policies, land first, everything thereafter.... It is difficult for people to align themselves with it.'* (Heidedal)

### **Racism, greed, militancy**

*'But he is not moving away from racism; he is still making them believe racism.'* (Durban)

*'I will not be part of it, I still hold a grudge about his greed in owning tenders when these tenders were supposed to have been used to help others.'* (Modimolle)

*'Those ones are just seeking war, you can see by the red berets.'* (Zeerust)

*'He is forever taking the youth back into history. Today's youth were never part of apartheid. The people are moving on, but they are brainwashing the youth.'* (Pretoria)

### **The appeal of Agang SA and comparisons with Cope**

The main challenge to Agang SA is that the bulk of citizens, as represented by those in this study, do not know of or much about the party. In many of the groups there was a complete absence of knowledge; in several others there was one person who did know, and who then filled in the rest of the group. The Thokoza group tried to explain: 'People are skeptical about Agang because it is still new and has not done anything.'

### **Who is Agang? 'What is that woman's name?'**

*'What is that?' 'A political party?' (Pilot)*

*'I have never heard of it.' 'It is just that the name is so unfamiliar.'* (Barberton)

*'It is a new political party, run by this lady, but I don't know her name.'* (Emalahleni)

A conversation in the Free State's Heidedal group illustrates ANC arguments about the rise and fall of parties that try to challenge the ANC. It includes uncensored tones of sexism:

*'Agang is in a hurry, it does not want to go step by step...I don't like a woman that challenges the president so quickly, without even having one seat in parliament.' 'This woman is not even established yet, but she talks a lot.' 'The people who decide to challenge the ANC come from here, come from there.... She should have joined...Cope.' 'Some people are suffering from being power-hungry.'*

Agang SA draws a few comparisons with Cope [a party that split from the ANC in 2008], mostly in the context of an opposition party that was supposed to have offered legitimate opposition to the ANC, but which has self-destructed.

### **Cope was supposed to bring opposition ...**

*'Cope was supposed to bring competition and opposition.... Now they have died off.'* (Durban)

*'It is finished with Cope.' 'They are not going anywhere.' 'They are all the same, they are all power hungry, these people, Cope, DA, the ANC, all of them.'* (Heidedal)

## Appendix A: Synopsis of the discussion guide

### **SOUTH AFRICA 2013 – RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE DISCUSSION GUIDE SYNOPSIS AUGUST 2013**

Designed by  
Susan Booysen

<b>SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION GUIDE CONTENTS</b>		
<b>MAIN THEME</b>	<b>Minutes allocated</b>	<b>Cumulative time in minutes</b>
1: Introduction	10–15	15
2: General mood, experiences of daily life	20	35
3: Experiences of the political system, human rights, rule of law	20	55
4: Public participation	15	70
5: Service delivery and local government	10	80
6: Access to information; the media	10	90
7: Messages	35	125
8: Closure	5	130
TOTAL	Up to 130 minutes	Up to 130 minutes

#### **ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS SYNOPSIS:**

<b>FG</b>	Focus group
<b>SA</b>	South Africa
<b>SAans</b>	South Africans

<b>SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION</b> (pp. 2–3 of discussion guide)		10–15 minutes
	Standard – FG research, purpose this group, who research is for, what happens with the information, observation (if relevant), no right or wrong answers, everybody's opinion crucial.	
<b>SECTION 2: GENERAL MOOD, EXPERIENCES OF DAILY LIFE</b> (pp. 3–4 of discussion guide)		20 minutes
2.1	Things you like / not like about living in THIS community / town / township – proud / happy / sad / angry. Probe on good / bad changes; Who to be credited / who responsible?	
2.2	One word / phrase feelings about SA today.	
2.3	Turning to SA GENERALLY: Good / bad things happening – what are the good / bad things; Why do you think they are happening (what is going right / wrong in SA today); Who or what is responsible?	
2.4	Comparisons to see how things have changed: Compare SA now with apartheid times; Compare with SA in 1990s just after start of democracy; How well is this democratic system of ours working – e.g. parliament, courts, cabinet, presidency of SA? Policy-making, political decisions.	
<b>SECTION 3: EXPERIENCES OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW</b> (pp. 5–8 of discussion guide)		25 minutes
3.1	Game of words – 22 institutions / parties in SA political system; 2 Follow-ups: Your MP / local councilor: do you know any of them; Public protector: Heard of her investigations?	
3.2	20 Years into democracy – Varied ('some / others say ...') views on government record on human rights (as in Chapter 2 in SA Constitution). Remind me of a few of these rights ...	
3.3	I brought summaries to refresh our memories. Read brief summary. Tell me of one of these rights on which government has made difference to your life / life of someone you know / close to you. How has your / this person's life changed because of this right? Which of these rights have we not seen enough of?	
3.4	Does our system of government and rule of law work in SA? Give explanations of the terms. What works really well? Are all South Africans 'equal before the law'? Or are some treated better than others? Thus, do some SAans have more protection, more opportunities than others?	
3.5	Can we rely on government to implement the good policies it often talks about? What are the good policies on which we have seen results? Can you think of policies that have just remained nice words on paper? Promises on which government still has to deliver?	
3.6	Has government done enough to end the legacies of Apartheid, e.g. inequality, racism, poverty, done land redistribution? Have civil society / community organizations (those not in government) and business done enough?	
3.7	What are the organizations that you use, informal / formal ones probably in your community, to help yourself to make your life better?	
3.8	Do the Courts and Police do well – are they looking after your rights?	
<b>SECTION 4: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b> (pp. 8–10 of discussion guide)		15 minutes
4.1	Is it important <i>to vote in elections</i> or do other forms of participation (protest, meeting with your MP, phoning the radio, etc.) work just as well or better?	
4.2	What do you do if you want government to do something for you or your community – e.g. nothing much, just trust government to know and get on with job; threaten to vote for an opposition party; go to party branch meeting; get meeting with government officials; work in an organization; anything else ...?	
4.3	Show of hands – Who voted in 2009 national elections (if old enough)? How do you feel about voting nowadays – e.g. like it as much as in 1994; feel	

	government listening to voters; think ‘the people’ will continue voting in 2014 – & vote for ANC as much as in the past; think Agang will make an impact; think the Economic Freedom Fighters will take support away from ANC? Anyone else?	
4.4	Do counts by show of hands who will vote in 2014 elections – Who think will vote & will not vote & not yet decided? Those <i>who want to vote</i> : Tell rest why you think they should vote. Those <i>who do not want to vote</i> : Tell rest why they should also not vote.	
4.5	Identify strongest reason ‘to vote’ and ‘not to vote’. Let’s look at why people generally in SA want to vote / not vote – and some of the reasons may be like the ones you just mentioned. Two sets of reasons given. First read out whole anti-list – & then ask group which one sounds like the strongest reason <i>not to vote</i> . Second read out whole pro-list & ask which one sounds like strongest reason <i>to vote</i> .	
4.6	Issues for parties to talk about in their 2014 election campaigns: Which one issue on the list is most important for the parties to talk to you about?	
<b>SECTION 5: SERVICE DELIVERY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b> (pp. 10–11 of discussion guide)		10 minutes
5.1	Moderator, role-play local government person coming into this community to hear what your local government <i>should do here</i> . What is the most important task my local Government must do here? One word or phrase: How good or bad have we been faring? Specifically, what do you think of service delivery in this community?	
5.2	Are your councilors working hard to make your life better, or are they just making deals to get rich, are they just thinking about themselves?	
5.3	Target board exercise using word cards (read out list and follow group’s directions to place the cards). Which one of the tasks must government immediately work on, which ones are less important?	
<b>SECTION 6: ACCESS TO INFORMATION; THE MEDIA</b> (p. 11 of discussion guide)		10 minutes
6.1	Do the media in SA – mainly newspapers, radio, television – have too many freedoms, or do they just do their job in bringing us the news – good and bad in SA? Do they have a responsibility to help us find out what is going on in politics and the government? Or should they be careful in what they share?	
6.2	How do you get your information on what is going on in politics and government? Where do you hear, who tells you? Do you feel you get enough information, would you like to hear from other sources as well, which ones? Should government tell the media what to write – or should the media just publish what they find out?	
<b>SECTION 7: MESSAGES – Five sub-sections; 25 messages</b> (pp. 12–14 of discussion guide)		35 minutes
Intro	Strongly emphasize that ‘messages are deliberately cast in this or that direction. Please do not feel that you have to agree, whichever direction a particular statement goes’.	
a:	Change in multiparty, electoral and human rights contexts	10 messages
b:	Protest and participation	4 messages
c:	Human rights and rule of law	5 messages
d:	Corruption and trust	3 messages
e:	Leaders and leadership	3 messages
<b>8: CLOSURE</b> (p. 14 of discussion guide)		5 minutes
	Standard – anything to add? Check with observers (if relevant). Thank participants for their contributions.	